NANOOK OF THE NORTH

Julian W. Bilby

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NANOOK
OF THE NORTH

THE STORY OF AN ESKIMO FAMILY

BY

JULIAN W. BILBY, F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR OF
"AMONG UNKNOWN ESKIMO"

ILLUSTRATED

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

For several years the name "Nanook" (The Bear), as that of an Eskimo hunter, has been widely familiar in England and America, since "Nanook of the North" was the title of a cinematograph film produced by Mr. R. G. Flaherty, F.R.G.S., and exhibited by Messrs. Revillon Frères and Messrs. Pathé. In that film was told the life-story of a certain Eskimo who chanced to bear the common Eskimo name—Nanook. Mr. Flaherty, in a chapter in his book *My Eskimo Friends,* has described how these pictures were taken.

The present volume gives in words the life-story of a typical Eskimo—as the cinematograph film gave it in pictures; but it makes no claim that this is the history of the Eskimo named Nanook who was known to Mr. Flaherty. On the other hand, the illustrations in this volume are reproduced, some from the film (by kind permission of Messrs. Revillon Frères and Messrs. Pathé) and others from photographs taken at the same time as the film (by kind permission of Messrs. Revillon Frères); so that many of them contain portraits of the most celebrated bearer of the name.

The Author has lived amongst the Central Eskimo for many years, and this book is the outcome of his knowledge acquired from close observation and personal friendship with the people.

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PREFACE

In writing this Preface I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Walter Wood for the help he has given in the literary work of this book.

The incidents related herein are true, only the names of persons and localities having been changed. The book deals with the life of the Central Eskimo as it was until a comparatively few years ago. To-day, the tribal customs and beliefs are gradually dying out; for the great fur-trading companies have pushed forward, the North-West Mounted Police have established posts in several parts of the country, and the land has been made subject to Canadian law.

It is not everyone who realizes the great differences in the climatic conditions of the Arctic countries, differences which influence the conditions of the tribes of Eskimo that live there. In Southern Greenland vegetation is more abundant and living is easier because the Gulf Stream touches the coast. In Alaska vegetation and timber are plentiful, owing probably to some warm current that has the same effect of improving the climate. In Labrador and Ungava, which are sub-Arctic, there is also well-timbered land and in the summer months abundance of fish, so that there the conditions of life are most favourable. But in Baffin Land, Cockburn Land, and other districts which constitute

the home of the Central Eskimo, the Arctic current sweeps the coast, there is no timber of any kind, and conditions of life are most severe. This part of the territory, therefore, has been the last to come under the protection of the Canadian Government, and there the native customs and superstitions have found their last stronghold. Many dark deeds as well as many acts of heroism have been performed there by the natives, the full history of which will never be known. But through it all the Eskimo have fought their fight, manfully and well, against terrible conditions; and now, with the generous help of the great trading firms, the protection of a wise Government, and the guidance of the great missionary societies of the English and Canadian Church, their lot is brighter and according to the deserts of such a brave and hardy race.

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NANOOK OF THE NORTH

CHAPTER I

THE HUNTER AND HIS TRIBE

On a snow-capped lonely hill which rose gaunt and bare from the bleak and barren earth Nanook the Hunter scanned the gloomy prospect, musing on the chances of the coming winter and his power to help the poorer members of his tribe from his store of meat. He was chief of the Ivaleet, and to him they looked for counsel and food in times of stress as confidently as they expected Sukkenuk, the chief conjuror, to make the weather fit for filling empty larders.

Nanook was motionless in the thick fur clothing that concealed his fine proportions. There was no suggestion in the heavy garments of the tallness of his figure or the breadth of shoulder and the depth of chest, nor of the easy poise of the body and the hunter's marvellous powers of endurance. Only the kind brown eyes, hawk-like in their keenness, searching everywhere and missing nothing, showed the ardour of his spirit and the sureness of his courage.

Autumn was growing late in the Arctic. For many weeks the snow-caps on the hills had been creeping downward, and Nanook saw that the valleys were full of swirling, drifting snow. Overhead the leaden clouds discharged an endless shower of snow, and the oppressive stillness was broken only by the howls of a famished

wolf. To the south a sullen sea rolled under a covering of pancake ice, too thin to bear a heavy weight, yet thick enough to cut off progress in that direction. To the north snow-clad hills and valleys, the true barrens of the Arctic wilds, stretched to the Pole.

The migratory birds, amongst them the swan, duck, ptarmigan and snow-bunting, had long since gone south. A solitary raven flapped across the valleys to its home in a cranny high in the face of a cliff, croaking as if rebuking Nature for her barrenness, but watching as sharply as Nanook for any sign of food.

The sky was obscured by a heavy mist through which two mock suns shone dimly. They were in line with the true sun, and each was surrounded by its own halo, telling of worse weather to come, and looking like the Spirit of the Wilds brooding over desolation.

From time to time an Arctic owl flew softly across the hunter's vision, coming and going silently. All these things and more he saw, and as he watched he longed for the south winds to give place to the bitter northerly gales which would harden the ice and with their awful weight of wind beat down the deep snow enough to make it bear the sled and snowshoe and provide the blocks to build the winter houses.

Nanook, as he thought of the winter which was now so near, gazed upon the scene beneath him. In a space by itself stood the small, well-built trading-station, consisting of a frame-built house and some store-houses by its side. This station was the outpost of a great trading company, and was directed by a factor who had spent

many seasons in the far northern regions. His business was to trade and barter the produce of the country, and Nanook and his people had learnt to know him as a kind and just man. To him the hunters brought furs, raw hides and blubber, and in return received as payment guns, ammunition, knives and other articles necessary for their hunting.

Nanook, in addition to being chief of the tribe, was headman to the factor, and he was as renowned for the honesty of his dealings as he was for his skill and courage as a hunter—and his name meant "The Bear."

At a little distance was the village, nestling under the brow of a hill near the seashore. It was a poor collection of twenty or more sealskin tents, each sheltering a complete family. These dwelling-places were the converted summer homes of the tribe. Over the sealskin a thick layer of heather was sewn, and this was banked heavily with snow. Skin, heather and snow were enough for present purposes of warmth, but not enough for the winter; and the tribe was additionally snug by being land-bound. The people were waiting for the hardening of the ice, so that they could hunt and travel over the sea.

In front of each tent a team of dogs, five or six, were curled up. They were fierce, lean and ravenous, and, like their master on the lonely hill, their thoughts were concentrated on the eternal problem of food. Rations had been scant and rare, and the leader of each team kept watch on his special patch of ground—a certain area around the front of the tent upon which, in the

goodness of dogs' providence, family scraps and refuse might be thrown.

In that land of hard lives it was indeed, in the dog's world, a case of those taking who had the power and those keeping who could. The dog of the successful hunter did pretty well, sharing his master's prosperity; but the poor hunter's team were sorely put to it to keep skin and bone together. So it happened that a close and snarling watch was kept for scraps, and that when any were thrown out the most alert and powerful team were victors. Yet famished dogs, desperate through hunger, and with wits sharpened by privation, would slink and crawl round from back places and pounce upon a morsel before the rightful team could get it. Then arose a chorus of howls and snarls as rightful owner and stealthy thief fought and rolled in the snow. The end came with the swift retreat of the vanquished thieves and the final barking of the victors, as if saying, "Now you see what comes of trying to steal honest dogs' food. Don't try it again. If your master can't keep you, find a better! Gurr-r!"

The hunters had taken the results of their summer and autumn hunt to the trading-station, and were now well furnished with ammunition for the winter—all, with the exception of Terraginear ("The Fox"). This member of the community, by nature a good hunter, by inclination a thief and a wastrel, depended upon the forbearance and generosity of others to supply his wants. He had been fitted out repeatedly by the factor in the hope that he would mend his ways; but debt had been

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

"Gurr-r"

added to debt and written off as bad, and the factor had declined to help him further. For the present the Fox's cunning and shamelessness enabled him to keep some sort of place in the tribe, but Nanook knew that the day could not be distant when strong measures would be needed to deal with him effectively.

Nanook, as he stood on the hill and gazed and listened, smiled as he scanned the landscape, looking for a party of young hunters he had sent off a few days before to search for fresh supplies. They had been away two "sleeps"—three days—and were due back, and, when they came, would not past leanness and hunger be forgotten by man and dog in an orgy of feasting?

Stores had been getting low, and what were left had to be used with care. But there was no need for anxiety, for the summer hunt had been successful. Many large sealskin bags had been filled with walrus and seal meat, and there was still left plenty of seal-blubber for the lamps, while enough walrus tusks and walrus-hide had been put aside for making and repairing spears, sealing-lines and dog harness. The bags of meat had been hidden in *caches,* far enough away from camp to be safe from the onslaughts of the dogs, and they were piled heavily with rocks to protect them from even the bears and wolves.

If danger to the food came it was from the animal creation, and not from man, for in that community it was known that everything would be shared out fairly and that the poor would get their proper allowance. Here in this hard world men who knew not true Social-

ism practised it, and all, with rare exceptions like Terraginear, were guardians of the buried food which the frozen *caches* held in readiness for the lean, bare days that were as sure to come as the long and sunless winter.

Nanook's heart warmed at the thought of these bounteous places in Mother Earth. To him the vast bleak wilds yielded in due season their concealed stores, and gave him and his the joy that thirsty men feel in the desert when a well is reached.

"The hunters are late," he murmured, "but they will soon be home. The sun goes to his rest and the raven wings his way to his eyrie. I too will go to mine." He rose and slowly made his way to the largest tent under the bluff, where he pushed aside the wrangling dogs and entered his autumn dwelling. As he did so his features again relaxed and the genial smile brightened his dark face.

Nanook the Hunter had suddenly changed into the mere man, and with the closing of the flap of the tent behind him he shut out all temporary cares, including food supplies and missing hunters, for he was back amongst his greatest treasures. Here was his home, and he rejoiced as he looked upon the neatness, tidiness and cheerfulness of it all and the evidence of wealth and position it afforded.

Thick layers of heather were spread on the ground at the back of the tent. These were covered with thick rugs of deerskin, spread over the heather, and on them were neatly rolled deerskin sleeping-blankets, made to fit round and under the body like a sleeping-bag. At

each side of the tent was a lamp, a semi-circular soapstone dish filled with seal-oil; a line of dried moss and cotton plant spread along the front edge burning brightly as it was fed by the oil, which was illuminant and fuel combined. From a stick hanging over each lamp depended strips of beaten blubber, constantly dripping and replenishing the lamps, while on the top of a framework were spread articles of clothing drying. At the side were some bunches of freshly-gathered seaweed which had formed part of the midday meal; and there had been dainties in the form of ducks' eggs, collected during the previous spring and kept frozen by being placed in a cranny of the rocks, away from the sun and covered with snow.

When Nanook entered the tent he saw his wife, Annorak ("Clothing"), sitting by the lamp, busily repairing some garments.

"Your name suits you well," said Nanook. "Your industry will keep me from frostbite."

"And preserve my hunter," answered Annorak readily, but not pausing in her task. She smiled upon a chubby gurgling baby who was at the back of the tent, clothed in a fur cap, decorated with many insertions of various-coloured fur. He wore a jacket reaching nearly to the middle of his back, and that was all. But the bareness of his lower half gave him a delightful freedom and as his father entered he rolled abandonedly on the fur rugs and hailed him with a cry of joy.

Nanook smiled, his wife smiled too, and the infection of happiness extended to the hunter's old father Atseak,

grey-haired and with a weather-beaten face that was lined and wrinkled like a walnut shell.

The old man was seated on a stool formed of one of the lumbar vertebræ of the large whale. He was repairing a sealing-spear, and the task gave him time to dwell on the dangers and adventures of the chase on which life and prosperity had always depended, just as it did now.

Nanook's swift look took in his eight-year-old son Tooktoo ("The Deer"), sturdy and strong, and even now showing the strain of the born hunter. He held in his hand a piece of sealskin, pierced with holes, through which he was striking imaginary seals with a miniature spear, picturing the time when he would own a real spear, and strike real seals through real holes in the ice. His grandfather had promised to make him such a spear, and his father had pledged his word to take him on a hunting trip as soon as he was big enough to go. Tooktoo felt that that could not be long, because already he knew well the calls and habits of some of the birds and animals, and could mimic them perfectly. He often deceived his fellow-playmates by his mimicry and ran away laughing at their discomfiture. The men also would laugh, for they had done the same in the days of their own youth.

"Father," cried Tooktoo as Nanook entered, "did you see the sleds returning? Surely it is time the hunters were home again?"

"No," answered Nanook, "I saw nothing. But the sleds and the hunters will come in time. And what have

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

Annorak

you been doing while I was away, my son?" He spoke caressingly and looked proudly at the boy.

"Learning to spear seals, have you not, small one?" said his mother, proudly too, and answering for him.

"Yes," replied Tooktoo. "And grandfather has promised to make me a real spear and a real whip, like those he hunted with when he was a mighty hunter like yourself."

"And as you too will be, my son, for it is in the blood as surely as the snow is from the heavens. The spear and the whip will be yours in time." Nanook laughed as he turned to his father and went on, "And *you* have not been idle, I know. What have you done? Ah, yes, I see—and done it well." He rubbed his hands and sniffed expectantly.

"Yes, that," answered Atseak, pointing to a pile of large gull-skins, the bodies of which were simmering in the pot.

"And I had not noticed it before," exclaimed Nanook. "You are a hunter still! Tell me how they came."

"Yes," continued Atseak, pleased with his triumph, "my back is bent, my arms are not strong enough for the hunt, and my hearing and eyesight fail; but I have not forgotten my hunting craft nor the cries of the birds, and so I went to the shore and built a little snow-hut between the boulders, near high-water mark. I crept inside and hid myself, leaving a small hole in the top. I spread pieces of blubber round the hole and began calling—like this." He gave an imitation of a gull which was so lifelike that Nanook clapped his hands in

admiration and Tooktoo broke his silence by taking up the mimicry.

"Soon a gull sailed over me and circled round," continued Atseak. "He had his sharp eye on the blubber spread round the hole, and I had mine on him. He saw nothing but the bait, and thought of nothing but how he could get it. Ho, ho! Never did he expect to catch such a fish as he got! That was my hand, with which I reached up and gripped his legs as he perched by the hole. I drew him down. Oh, yes. That was the way I caught him, and his brothers too, when they spied the hole and wanted to know what was in it. Ho, ho!" He laughed again and Nanook and Tooktoo joined in the chorus, Tooktoo repeating his bird call.

"It was only when night fell and I had enough that I came home," continued Atseak. "And that is why the pot is boiling and we shall have warm gull-skin socks to keep us from freezing. And I am glad that I can now say, 'Let us eat, my son,' for I know that you ate nothing this morning, and that indeed you had nothing but a drink of hot water."

Nanook smiled indulgently. This was not the first time he had made a long fast; for he knew what it was to go for several days with nothing but water, so that the women and children should have what there was to eat. It was of his poorer neighbours that he thought now, and he said, "First call Seorak, for I know she has nothing."

"Ah!" exclaimed Atseak, and his wrinkled face became grave; while Annorak looked hastily at her chil-

dren, as if to assure herself that all was well with them, for Seorak had an evil reputation as a witch, and was thought to be able to cast spells upon those who offended or annoyed her.

Seorak was a destitute widow. Long ago her husband while hunting had been caught and crushed in the ice and had never returned to his tribe. She had then aspired to the post of medicine woman, but had failed to pass the tests, though she had learned enough, and remembered it, to give her a power which she never failed to exercise so that she might gain at least a miserable livelihood. Her hair was thin and grey and dishevelled, her clothes were very old, worn and dirty, and her tent, pitched on the outskirts of the village, in an angle of the cliff, was small and mean, being made of part of the covering of a last season's tent which no one else wanted. It was patched, leaky and in keeping with her poverty and isolation. Her only companion was Okerlil, an orphan girl from another tribe, whose chief duty it was to work and beg for Seorak.

Seorak knew her uncanny power, especially over the young, and through them over the mothers, and she exercised it to the utmost. She inspired fear by covering her head with her hood and rocking to and fro as she uttered weird cries which were believed to bring her into direct touch with the spirit world. An ancient song, sung in a dirge-like key, would alarm a timid housewife and make her dispatch one of her children to the witch with an offering of meat and oil, to be pushed hastily and in terror within the flap of the tent. With a trem-

bling cry of "Hi, Seorak, it is for you," the messenger left the gift and fled back to the safety of the home tent. For some time afterwards peace reigned, but the day was sure to come when Seorak would crouch and croon and wail until her wants were once more satisfied. No dogs guarded her wretched tent; no visitors went near her; yet she knew all that went on in the village, and it was said of her that the holes in her tent were both eyes and ears which missed nothing.

"Go, and tell her to come, Tooktoo," said Nanook kindly. "She will not hurt you. She is poor and hungry, and we have plenty."

The boy obeyed, and leaving the tent, he made his way, not far, to the witch's shelter and called at the entrance, "Hi, Seorak, come, come!"

"Ah, I come," said Seorak, and she hurried off with Okerlil.

As soon as Seorak entered the hunter's tent a chilly silence fell upon the family. Even the baby ceased his gurgling and sought safety in his mother's hood, from which he peered in round-eyed suspicion at the witch.

Seorak, mumbling, seated herself on the ground and munched her liberal portion of gull stew, though the stock was scanty. The food satisfied her hunger, but no thought of gratitude disturbed her. She felt that she was an alien, she saw in Nanook a reminder of the hunter who had been taken from her long ago by the remorseless ice, and in the happy family and comfortable tent she realized what might have been her own

good fortune. But most of all she felt the shrinking from her of the young. The witch needed an opening for the venting of her wrath, and she found it in Atseak, for had not this very hunter been spared by the ice that had seized and held her husband?

She turned to the silent old man and snarled, "And so, Atseak, you have been gull-catching! You! I have known the day when you would have left such poor work to the boys and women." She laughed scornfully. "But I forget—you are like myself, worn out and rheumaticky, and forced to stay in camp. Well, age will come, and death as surely follow! Take that for comfort, old man."

The bitter shafts went straight home, as she knew they would, for Atseak was weak on the subject of his age. The young hunters applauded his skill and were glad to be taught by him; and as for his rheumatism, did it not sometimes leave him, especially on warm days, when he sat in the sun and almost felt new blood coursing through him, and as if he could rise and run with the youngest and the strongest of them? Yet here was the village witch, despite her hospitable entertainment, gibing at him and belittling his prowess. And had she not touched him on his sorest spot, his age? He hated to be reminded of it, and still more of its grisly comrade, looming perhaps very near in the background.

Atseak returned snarl for snarl and stab for stab. "Age," he said. "Remember, Seorak, if you can, when *you* were young—yes, and better looking, though that

need not have been much. Remember when you had many friends. And now—why, you have not even dogs!"

His outburst made even Seorak keep silence, which she sullenly maintained until she rose and returned to her tent with a gift of blubber for her lamp.

"Come, let us be merciful," pleaded Nanook, when Seorak had gone. "She is old and friendless, and bitterness has taken hold of her. But we must not think ill of her for that—we shall all be old in time. And you, Atseak, let her be. You have done well—better than I. Your skill is as great as ever, and the young hunters still look to you as a master. Your skill has given us a meal and provided us with socks for the winter. Yes, let Seorak rest in peace. Besides," he added half humorously and yet half fearfully, "if we rouse her too much she may cast her spells over us! Now then, let us sleep."

His geniality cleared the cloudy atmosphere and with light hearts they prepared for the night. The tent fastenings were tested, to prevent the dogs from raiding the food. New wicks were placed in the lamps and flattened into a low flame, while freshly-beaten blubber was hung over the lamps, to keep them constantly supplied with oil. The sealskin bucket was filled with semi-liquid ice from the stream which meandered shoreward under a coating of ice and snow, so that those who wanted drink might have it. Finally blankets were unrolled and spread, and all was ready for a long rest.

But Nanook did not lie down. All the time the preparations were being made he had been listening intently, and his sharpened hearing detected a sound that was not made by wind or bird or wild animal. The dog teams also had become uneasy, and had started whimpering, as a sign of uneasiness and expectation.

"So they have heard it too," muttered Nanook. "Ah, my son! and you've heard it! I am glad, for your young ears are as sharp as a knife-blade. Well, and what is it? Your grandfather knows it too, though he grows deaf."

"I hear a dog's bark coming down on the wind from far over the hills," answered Tooktoo.

"Yes," said Nanook proudly, as he watched the boy's eager face and gleaming eyes. "And what is it?"

"The hunters coming home," cried Tooktoo. "Now I hear the whips cracking and the dogs barking and the hunters shouting."

He rushed to the door of the tent and pulled it open, and as he did so the whole village suddenly broke into a joyous uproar that was intensified by the stillness of the night.

Men, women and children, who had just made ready for sleep, roused up and tumbled and ran out into the darkness, and all joined in the welcome.

The teams added to the chorus, the leaders with their deep bay and the younger dogs with shrill trebles, while frantic pups, not knowing what it all meant, but understanding that a noise was expected, yelped ecstatically.

The children danced and shouted as they scampered towards the sleds to do their share in dragging them over the rough places towards the tents.

All gloom and fear had vanished, all the lean times passed from remembrance, and even Seorak forgot her bitterness and prepared to begin a fresh feast. She joined in the general hubbub with shrill, unearthly cries.

With final shouts and cracks of whips and to the accompaniment of a loud chorus from the whole of the dogs, the hunters dashed into the camp, and their dogs were unharnessed and frisked and gambolled with their stay-at-home brethren; while the boys coiled up the harness and whips and placed them indoors, out of the way of the dogs, which would certainly devour them if they got the chance.

The sleds and spare skins, too, were put for safety on top of the snow pillars, since even they were not safe from the onslaughts of the wolfish animals.

The hunters had returned laden with deer-meat and bear-meat, so that they could, with easy minds, accept Nanook's cordial invitation to fall to on his store of frozen meat. The reserve could go now, since there was plenty for all.

The hunters shared with all the produce of the chase, and when the supplies had been distributed and neighbours invited, the feasting began, and eating and drinking took the place of sleep.

Nanook's supply was the largest in the camp, and most of the young men and their relatives crowded into his tent to share his hospitality. And a fine, bronzed,

sturdy set of men they were, all in high spirits, living in the present, forgetting yesterday, and caring nothing for the morrow.

The hunters had made a forced march so that they might reach camp before night. They looked enormous in their heavy deerskins, frost-covered, and in other climes they would have been accepted as the Father Christmases of childish faith. They looked what they were—splendid, healthy, Arctic Highlanders.

Very soon the hunters were seated, eating huge pieces of meat and drinking bowls of broth which had been kept ready for their possible return. When the flesh was eaten there came the banquet of the bones, and talk and laughter mingled with the sounds of cracking, as the long hunting-knives broke the bones so that the marrow could be scooped out and eaten as the last and greatest treat of all.

The hunters radiated heat, good humour and contentment, and Annorak rejoiced as she saw that her guests were well supplied with food and drink. But she had more than that to do. The news of free and generous refreshment had gone round the village, and a stream of child messengers had come to Nanook's tent to receive the shares of those members of the tribe who were too old to move, but were able to guard the tents.

So it happened that when the village should have been deep in slumber and the children in the dreamland of the Eskimo there was wakefulness and feasting.

There was now no more cheerful soul than Seorak, to whom Annorak had given a generous portion. She be-

came reconciled to Atseak, reminding him of the great days of his huntsmanship, and dwelling on his present sagacity and his tribal importance; and Atseak, mellowed by her flattery and his broth and meat and bones, eloquently pictured the happy days of her youthful beauty and even such lavish hospitality as this, so that when she departed to her own poor tent it was with a smile and a warmth in her heart which caused her to say to Nanook and Annorak, "Ye are worthy of thanks!"

When the feast was ended and the remains of the meat were placed into the receptacles near the entrance of the tent, there followed laughter, jokes and friendly badinage. This man, it was told, had not been able to keep up with the rest; that one had mistaken a boulder of ice in the distance for a bear and had actually loosed his dogs at it; and another hunter had tracked a hare, but failed to get it.

And all around the boys stood, listening and admiring; whilst the girls, graceful and soft-footed, with their best dresses on, made many journeys to and fro, where one would have done; and like their more civilized sisters, feigned complete indifference to the young men, but all the same glanced covertly at them. The sly looks were noticed and received the attention which it was meant they should have; while Eskimo maidens saw without pretending to see, and kept up an illusion which is just as knowingly practised all the world over, in tropical as well as frozen climes.

While this by-play was left to those who were well fitted to undertake it, Nanook and the other older men

dealt with the problems of the larder and the prospects of hunting.

What was the country like, and how hopeful were the signs of game?

The reports of the hunters were not encouraging, for with the soft south winds a shower of rain had come, followed by a sharp frost, and the rocks were covered everywhere with a sheet of ice, especially in the lowlands, where moss and the larvæ that lived in it were most abundant. This meant that the food supply was to a large extent cut off. The deer could not easily reach the moss under the coating of ice, and had migrated to higher places, while the smaller animals had been forced to seek food elsewhere. Very few tracks were to be seen, and all appearances indicated a hard and hungry winter.

"But what does that matter?" said Kakka ("A Hill"), a young hunter, laughing as he glanced admiringly at Nappotsee ("A Supporting Post"), the village belle. "Things will come right in time. We have enough for to-day. Let to-morrow take care of itself." He glanced at Nappotsee again, and neither he nor she gave serious thought to matters which troubled Nanook and the more sedate and anxious hunters.

"If the north wind comes soon," said Nanook, slowly shaking his head, "all will be well, but if these soft winds hold there will be poor times for us all. However, we have done our best as hunters. Now we will see what the conjurors can do for us in bringing brighter days."

"Yes," said Kakka, meeting the quick, admiring

glance of Nappotsee, "let Sukkenuk ('The Sun') earn his pay. He ought to throw some light upon our darkness."

He and his hearers laughed, for he was the acknowledged humourist of the tribe.

"Yes," agreed Nanook, "we will have Sukkenuk, certainly; but you've forgotten Obloreak ('The Star'). He too is a conjuror, though a lesser light than the sun."

"True, I had forgotten," Kakka said pleasantly. "Let him conjure first, for the more light we have the better we shall see."

It was a bold remark for a young hunter to make, and though Kakka hoped that no evil might befall yet he felt rewarded by the admiration which Nappotsee plainly showed for him.

"To-morrow, then," said Nanook, "we will have the conjuration—the killing of Sedna, the Spirit of the Sea."

CHAPTER II

THE CONJURATION

OKERLIL ("The Hare") had enviously watched the passages between the young men and girls, and as she went back with Seorak she was in a whirl of hope and jealousy, hope that she too might find her hunter, and jealousy of the tribal sisters who had gone so far on the road of discovery. But Okerlil was poor, friendless, dowerless, and little more than a slave to Seorak, who terrified the tribe.

"The conjurers know much, but I know more," said Seorak as she and Okerlil entered the tent. "Yes, I know better than them all the story of the killing of Sedna, the Spirit of the Sea."

"Your memory is as long as the winter," said Okerlil. "Rest, and I will see that everything is made ready for the night. Nobody can tell a tale as well as you."

The witch was comfortable. The feast had gone well with her and the girl's flattery was soothing.

"Yes," she said, smiling grimly, "my memory is as long as the road into the beyond. You are a good girl. Trim the lamp and I will tell the story of Sedna. In the far past, when our forefathers were great hunters, and the conjurers were wiser and more powerful than they are to-day, there lived a mighty hunter who had a

very beautiful daughter named Sedna. She had no mother to advise and guide her when wooers came. There were many of these, but she was indifferent to them all, and her conduct angered her father, who wished to have a son-in-law. The time came when Sedna's father showed his anger at her conduct.

"'Why will you not marry?' he asked her. 'What do you expect to do when you are old and helpless? Do you wish to depend on the charity of neighbours—you, who should have sons of your own to support you?'

"Sedna listened to his protests, but all she said was that when the right man came she would marry.

"'Then may he come quickly,' replied her father angrily. 'Do not wait too long, or your looks will fade and no man will desire you.'

"Now a powerful genie who lived in a land far away had heard of Sedna and her beauty and how she would have none of her own menfolk. He could transform himself into either a bird or a man and he determined to fly away and see her. So taking the form of a sea-bird he flew across the ocean to Sedna's home. He studied her, and fell in love with her. He changed himself into a handsome young hunter, and paddled to the shore where Sedna was standing. He explained that he was a stranger, who had heard of her and her father, and he wished to pay his respects to them both.

"Sedna did not know who he was, nor did he explain; but she saw that he must be a skilful hunter and of a tribe who lived where hunting was good and plentiful,

so she invited him to stay until her father returned in the evening. When her father came home he warmly asked the stranger to remain as a guest.

"So the genie stayed, and while he hunted with the father he wooed and won Sedna. There should have been an arrangement with her father for marriage, but the genie did not do things like ordinary men. He did not wish his secret to be discovered, and persuaded her to go in his *kyaḳ* with him.

"Sedna discovered during the voyage that the man she looked upon as a husband was no ordinary being, but a spirit. Now with all her faults she was very human and did not want a genie but a man; so she became unhappy, and though the genie did everything he could for her she pined for her own people and home. Her father suspected her misery and plight, and he, besides being enraged at the conduct of his guest, longed to have Sedna home again.

"The father prepared his boat and set sail, and he reached the land while the genie was away.

"Sedna saw her father's boat slowly sailing along the coast. She signalled to him, and he, running his craft ashore, took her aboard and steered for home. Both were happy now as the boat flew along the water.

"It was not till eventide that the genie returned to his home and found that there was no Sedna awaiting him. He saw the boat-marks on the beach and knew that his bride had fled from him. He was sore and enraged, and before Sedna and her father had gone far the genie had

changed again into a great bird, and swiftly pursued his flying bride.

"The boat was rushing home, but the genie overtook it and called for Sedna. He could not see her, for her father had hidden her beneath the skins and gear in the boat.

"Sedna heard, but did not answer, and her terror grew as she realized that in his fury the genie had raised a storm. Soon the sea was raging and her father was forced to shorten sail, hoping that they might even yet reach the land. He was brave and proud, and loved his daughter, but above all things else he loved his own life, and when he saw that unless the boat was lightened it would sink he determined to throw Sedna overboard, trying to comfort himself by thinking that it was better that he should live than that both should perish.

"So in that storm Sedna was dragged from her hiding-place by her father, and in spite of her prayers and struggles was cast into the raging sea. She sank with a wild cry, but the cruel sea was not so cruel as her father and her husband. It allowed her to rise, and when she came to the surface she saw the boat very near and clutched the gunwale with the tips of her fingers.

"She implored her father to save her, but his answer was to seize an ax and chop off the first joints of her fingers.

"Sedna sank again, and as she did so the severed tips became seals.

"For the second time she arose and again clutched the boat and begged for pity; but her father, mad with fear,

and believing her to be claimed by the Spirit of the Sea, struck again with his ax and cut off the second joints of the fingers.

"Once more Sedna sank, and this time the severed joints became walrus.

"For the last time Sedna rose and feebly clutched the boat again, but faintly, imploring her father to take her in. But he was now beside himself in his madness, and his answer was as before, and his daughter, no longer able to hold to the boat, sank to the bottom of the sea.

"As she went down to rise no more the last of the severed joints became whales.

"So it was that Sedna became the guardian spirit of the creatures that live in an *igloo* on the bed of the sea. To protect them and save them from being killed she raises storms and makes bad weather, so that man shall not destroy the animals that were created from her fingers.

"Sedna is the Evil Spirit of the Seas, and her cries and moans are heard when the storms rage. It is to her also that the spirits of the bad hunters and the evil-doers go, to be kept below the sea for punishment; and only through the power of the conjurers, helped by their guardian spirits, can these prisoners be set free.

"When Sedna's father had done his wicked deed he was haunted by her cries and tormented by the fierce eyes of the giant bird that hovered near him. But he was as skilful on the sea as he was on land, and he at last reached his own shore, and exhausted though he

was, he pitched his tent, and in the company of his dog slept the sleep of grief and utter weariness.

"But the genie followed him to land, and caused a high tide to rise while he slept, and he and the tent and the dog were swallowed up. So Sedna's father went to the bottom of the sea to keep his daughter company and to be, with her, a gaoler of the spirits of wrongdoers and guardian of the creatures of the deep. And now," concluded Seorak, "you know why we have the autumn storms."

"And can the conjurers get into touch with Sedna?" asked Okerlil.

"Yes," answered Seorak, as she unrolled her fur blankets and spread them on her own side of the tent. "Good spirits always overcome the evil ones, and the conjurers have powerful guardian spirits who guide them to Sedna's dwelling-place, to kill her. This they do every autumn. Sedna, being a spirit, recovers from her wounds and comes back to life, so that she must be killed every year."

The following day was fixed for the killing of Sedna, and the Ivaleet were early astir and awaiting the ceremony.

Sukkenuk, the chief conjurer, had spent the night in preparation, and Obloreak, his assistant, had been not less busy and anxious. Both men, in their different ways, were masters of their craft, but there was something of the great medicine-man about Sukkenuk. He was strongly built, and slightly corpulent as the result

of much good living. He was oily-tongued, and in a more civilized country than his own might well have been a company promoter and a clever manipulator of the money market. It was his habit to assume a look of childlike credulity, and he would listen to the most commonplace remarks with an expression that seemed to say, "Wonderful! Can there possibly be so much wisdom in the world!" He would listen patiently, as if his only object was to hear and retain some of the profundity that was being poured upon him. Sukkenuk lured his visitors into speaking without restraint, and all the time he was sorting out the few grains of useful knowledge from the heap of verbal chaff; and this information he mentally tabulated for future use. The chief conjurer was in fact the moral rag-and-bone collector of his tribe.

Obloreak was the very opposite of this. He was a tall, gaunt individual with clothes that hung and flapped round his thin body, and his long grey hair accentuated the meagreness of his appearance. He had a habit, acquired by long practice, of looking at persons as though he beheld something beyond them; and he would move his lips as if conversing with invisible beings. Often, when he was addressing an audience, they would suddenly look behind them, and the minor conjurer did not fail to improve the opportunity by uttering groans that were clearly messages for the unseen.

It was agreed that Obloreak was not a suitable companion for a moonlight stroll. In years gone by he had aspired to the chief conjurership, but had failed to pass

the tests, so that his temper had become soured. He was allowed by Sukkenuk to perform minor ceremonies and to take part in principal performances, and it happened that the killing of Sedna was an occasion on which they could work together harmoniously, for it was important that, as their living depended chiefly on maintaining their occult mastery over the tribe, no risk should be taken of the people's confidence being undermined.

The chief conjurer had cleared his tent to make more room, and had been very careful to see that his professional mask and costume were in order and that the charms were properly attached. He had fasted and had not spared himself, so that every sense should be in tune and alert. He had a look of grim determination, for he was fully persuaded in what he was doing, and had laboriously cultivated powers which were not possessed by the ordinary members of the tribe.

Early in the day the people were invited to attend, and Nanook led the way to the chief conjurer's tent, followed by the leading men and their wives. The tent was not large, but the Eskimos are used to crowding, so that it was no discomfort for those who were inside, nor was it a hardship to be outside with those who pressed round the entrance.

Amongst the fortunate ones inside and nearest to the chief conjurer were Seorak and Okerlil, both seated, like the rest of the listeners, who had ranged themselves round the front and sides of the tent. All were silent and attentive, and the impressiveness of the *séance* was

heightened by the very low trimming of the lamps.

There was a thrill of expectation when Obloreak, with a sealing-line, began securely to bind Sukkenuk. He made the most of his task, and the chief conjurer, facing the back of the tent, with his head and face covered by his hood, rocked backward and forward, seated on the ground, and began a dirge-like song. As the binding went on the song grew in volume and horror, and suddenly Sukkenuk broke into a terrifying yell as he warmed to his conjuring and implored his guardian spirit to help him. He was developing deep earnestness, for much depended upon the success of his magic. He had a keen weather sense, and believed that what the tribe longed for was really coming, so that there was stern reality in his invocation, and as his frenzy grew and his yells became more intense and prolonged his hearers' sharp breathing and awed whispers were heard, and the sounds goaded him to greater effort. Finally Sukkenuk, who was straining at his bonds, uttered a piercing scream and convulsively fell back in a deathlike trance, and there he lay, stertorously breathing, while his congregation sought relief in exclamations and eager questions. It was the women who showed the emotion, the men remaining in grave and dignified silence.

"See how strongly his guardian spirit works!" a woman whispered, and others asked in low voices, "Now he gropes his way to Sedna's abode—will he find her? And will he be strong enough to kill her?"

Sukkenuk remained in deathlike stillness, with

ghastly face, staring eyeballs and foaming mouth, intently watched by the minor conjurer.

"Ah!" shrieked one woman, more highly strung than the rest. "See! He moves! His spirit is returning!"

"Ah, yes, his spirit is returning!" was echoed by the crowd outside, as the news was passed to them.

Suddenly, with renewed groans and another frenzied shout, Sukkenuk began to struggle, writhe and twist in his bonds, and with a spasmodic effort he freed himself, then, snatching his spear and knife he rushed from the tent, scattering the people as with wild cries and streaming hair he rushed round the village.

Obloreak, watching for his opportunity, ran after his chief, and the excited people awaited further happenings. The assistant conjurer was armed with his barbed sealing-spear, with line attached, and as soon as he reached Sukkenuk he closed with him and with a swift lunge apparently transfixed him through the body; then, hastily uncoiling the line he offered it to the assembled men as proof that Sukkenuk was indeed invincible. They took the line and dragged the conjurer about to satisfy themselves that he was speared, and at that stage he broke away and rushed to the seashore, where in a solitary spot he detached the spear-head and returned and showed himself. Sukkenuk pointed out that no marks were to be seen, and he declared that he had met, seen, struggled with, and killed Sedna, the Spirit of the Sea, and that now hunting would be possible and successful.

The tribe had watched a primitive display of craft by

two cunning members of their community, but they were willing to be deceived for their own peace of mind. By some it was believed that the spear which the assistant had plunged into his chief had not done more than penetrate the clothing into which it had been skilfully driven, but the majority believed that the spear had penetrated the body, and it was agreed that Sukkenuk was protected by his guardian spirits from the consequences of an assault which to an ordinary being or an animal would have been fatal.

The conjurer's frenzy, quite real, had awed and impressed the onlookers, who at the end of the opening ceremony accepted the assurance that all was well and that there would now come to them good hunting weather and generous supplies of food.

Seorak smiled grimly. She had her own thoughts and kept them to herself, for it would be foolish to weaken credulity.

Okerlil too smiled, but more cheerfully. She also had her thoughts, and they were very busy as she saw Kakka and Nappotsee gambolling with each other in the general merriment.

"You alone are left," said Seorak sourly, turning to Okerlil. "You should call up some genie to carry you away! But I would not let you go—I need you more than any hunter. Let no one seek to cast a spell on you —if he does I will make him wish he had never seen you, and make you sorry for the day your own tribe let you go."

Okerlil would have answered pertly, but just at that

moment Kakka and Nappotsee swept past her in a clumsy joyous whirl, and, while Nappotsee looked in some alarm at Seorak, Kakka gave a fleeting smile at the orphan.

"Yes," murmured Okerlil, "I also will learn to conjure"; and though she did not say it even to herself, yet she knew that her own conjuring would be done only with the artful weapons that great Mother Nature had given her; and as her bright eyes once more caught sight of Nappotsee she added to herself that if she made spear-thrusts at all they would be real and not like those of the medicine-men.

While there was joy and dancing amongst the people, Obloreak, mellowed by the success which he felt he had largely helped to win, moved about discreetly and insinuated that gifts always brought their rewards. He would have put the matter more boldly, but Sukkenuk had warned him that the resources of the tribe were limited and that the principal burden of reception rested by custom upon the chief conjurer. Sukkenuk too had clearly intimated that he also was at the receipt of gifts, and indeed he paved the way by opening wide his tent.

The merry-makers were in generous mood, and had already decided upon the things they could relinquish with the least regret.

What happened now was a general-post of personal property, and while it satisfied the conjurers and everyone else the proceeding added to the general hilarity. Owners of tents went inside and secured the articles,

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

Okerlil

mostly small and insignificant, which had been laid aside for the ceremony.

The women were the chief movers in this matter, and when they had secured the articles they rushed outside and flung them up into the air, so that they fell into the scrambling, wrestling crowd, which raised shouts of laughter. These showers of gifts were made in the expectation that in the coming year the spirits would remember the generous acts and bestow upon the donors presents in equal proportion. The well-to-do could afford to lose what they had contributed, and the poor, who could only throw rubbish, often got useful and valuable things in return, so that all were satisfied.

The young people, amongst whom Tooktoo was a daring spirit, rushed into the thick of the scrambling, and, regardless of rolling and being fallen upon bodily and almost flattened breathless, they seized and firmly held some coveted article.

Okerlil was not less active, so that while she was somewhat sorely handled in the scrimmaging she managed to get and hold a number of treasures which filled her with joy. She now owned bits of quite workable fur, one of dazzling whiteness to be used in constructing designs in her dress, several ivory buttons and—greatest treasure of all—a woman's knife, a very old one, it is true, but still a knife. In her delight she even forgot Nappotsee, and all her thoughts were centred in slipping away to her tent and secreting her precious possessions.

Tooktoo had flung himself bodily into the friendly fighting. He had spied a well-made spear-head, and no sooner had he noted it than he ran and seized it. Other sturdy youths too had set their dark eyes upon the weapon, and they rushed upon it with no less determination. Tooktoo had snatched the spear-head, and with it gripped in his right hand he was rolled and pushed and pulled and torn in every direction. But the more the competitors tried to wrench his spear-head from him the sterner was his resolve that he would perish rather than let it go. Finally, by one triumphant effort he hurled his opponents aside. Bruised and panting, he dashed to his father, into whose hands he delivered the spear-head for safe keeping, demanding an assurance that Nanook would not immediately run off to hunt with it.

"Nay, my son," laughed Nanook, "I could not fly fast enough to escape a young fawn like you. You are indeed a mighty little hunter."

And with that praise ringing in his ears Tooktoo hurried off with his treasure to resume his share in the revels.

Seorak also was gloating over her good fortune. She had become possessed of various useful things—a bunch of sewing-thread, a thimble made from a piece of hollowed deer-horn, some needles, and a skin-scraper. She had got them easily, for she had not crowded in the scrambles nor taken risks, and there had been a general disposition to propitiate the witch by letting her get what she obviously wanted. Her own contributions to

the general well-being had been a shower of good wishes and comforting forecasts, and she did her best to beam benignly as she presented them.

Hopes were cherished of the realization of expectations arising from many visits which had been previously paid to the chief conjurer. Personal wishes which had been carelessly made known, as though they were something that really did not matter; but the visitors' looks and minds had been correctly noted by Sukkenuk. He had been perfectly friendly, but had not given any definite promises; all the same, his sharp eyes had appraised the value of the things which the young man had brought and forgotten to take away—and which they perfectly well knew he would not remember to return.

This was Sukkenuk's harvest. It was understood that the best gifts would secure the best prizes, so that competition had been keen and the chief conjurer's gains had swelled accordingly, helped by suggestive silences and half promises. It was understood, too, that the least desired rewards would go to those whose gifts had been the most meagre. There were exceptions in the pairing off of young and newly-married couples who did not wish to exchange.

In these cases also visits had been paid to the chief conjurer, and arrangements made that were agreeable to all parties.

The program had been carefully made known to Obloreak, and he had been charged with its proper fulfilment. Knowing how disastrous mistakes would be,

the minor conjurer was determined that there should not be any.

Whilst the giving of presents and the scrambling were in full swing the conjurers retired to Sukkenuk's tent, and with closed entrance they were dressing for the day's greatest event. They put on hideous masks and grotesque clothing, making weird noises and uttering cries that were meant to warn off any possible visitor.

These alarms were heard by Tooktoo, and fired by the success of his fight for the spear-head he assembled a group of boys and led them, unseen, to the tent. They made investigation, but nothing was to be seen; then, in a burst of youthful heroism, Tooktoo with his spear-head noiselessly pierced a small hole in the tent, and bolstered up by his comrades took a hasty glance at the dim interior. In an instant he had scattered his band and was flying with scared face to his father, to whom he related what he had seen.

"Yes, my son," said Nanook, patting the head that nestled close to him, "they are indeed the evil spirits come to life again. But if you are no wiser than this your spear-head will be taken from you."

"Not if I can thrust it into the thief!" vowed Tooktoo in alarm, and with a laugh of admiration Nanook led his son towards the people, who were now assembled in the village.

They were drawn up in two long lines, facing each other, the men in one the women in the other, the spectators being at the back.

A loud sudden shout announced the bursting open of

Sukkenuk's tent, from which two diabolical-looking figures rushed. The minor conjurer had dressed himself to resemble a raven. He wore a tight coat and trousers, and had fastened sticks to his feet to represent the feet of a bird. A close-fitting cap was drawn low down and furnished with a long peak as a bird's bill, and in his hand he carried a short whip.

Sukkenuk was even more awe-inspiring. His face was covered with a mask with the usual tattoo marks. His body was clothed in a woman's loose jacket tied round the waist, and his legs were encased in loose trousers and his feet in very large boots. Fastened to his shoulder was a sealskin float filled with water, with a line attached. In his right hand he carried a walrus-spear as representing a man, and in his left a skin-scraper to indicate a woman.

These two beings shambled and hopped up and down between the human lines, the Raven indicating with his whip, according to previous arrangement, a man and a woman alternately. The couple immediately paired off, and advancing to the chief conjurer drank of the water and received his benediction; then, with cries of joy, they went to their tents, playfully pursued by the Raven.

And so the ceremony continued until all had been paired off, and then the conjurers returned to their own tents to examine their gains at leisure, and feel grateful or otherwise towards the donors.

Sounds of mirth and song came from every tent, except Seorak's, until late at night.

"At last *we* can rest," grumbled the witch, when the lamps in the tents had been lowered one after the other, and there was silence in the community. "Be thankful that you are not one of that wild crowd!"

"Ah, but some day I hope to be!" thought Okerlil, but she was much too wise to think aloud.

CHAPTER III

BUILDING THE VILLAGE

THE change foretold by the chief conjurer came soon after the killing of Sedna.

The sky cleared, and northerly gales shrieked and thundered through the passes and gullies. The temperature fell steadily to far below zero. The snow, powdered by the frost, blew about in clouds, like fine dust, which penetrated every cranny, and very soon the deep snow, utterly impassable before, and into which Nanook and his people sank to the waist, was beaten and pounded as if by some gigantic hammer into almost rock-like solidity.

From the shore seaward there was one unbroken white sheet of ice, hardening and thickening hourly, making it safe for the heaviest loads.

During the short day the sky was a cold steel blue, the edge of the sun just appearing over the hills and sinking at once, as though exhausted by its own feeble effort. Breath froze rapidly on hair and beard, and the touch of the wind was like electric needles pressing against the face.

At night the sky was a purple expanse in which brilliant stars winked and flashed—it was as though the heavens were a velvet cloak, studded with diamonds, emeralds and pearls. From time to time a shooting-

star, like some giant rocket, soared into and across the sky with a hissing, crackling sound, whilst above all the Aurora Borealis, like vast firelit curtains, hung in rows.

Outside Nanook's tent a little group of natives had gathered and were watching the magnificent spectacle.

Nanook joined the group and put their thoughts, like his own, into words. "Ah! It is a good sign," he said, pointing to the giant curtains as they moved backward and forward and waved and wreathed across the expanse. "See! The spirits of the dead hunters and the children are out. The hunters are after the bear, and the children are playing at ball. Yes, the spirits are pleased. There! There!" he exclaimed, as a star shot across the sky and was extinguished. "They have sent the ball across into the beyond, and still they are playing. They are promising us good hunting, and plenty. Sedna is truly dead."

They were all smiling as they entered their tents to arrange their plans. But before winter hunting could begin successfully winter quarters were necessary. The skin tents had been sorely battered by the storms, and the cold was penetrating.

In Nanook's tent the men met and discussed the sequence of building. It was decided that the houses of the chief and the chief conjurer should be built first, the rest according to the importance of an individual and the extent of his storehouse. But the discussion was pleasant and these details were soon settled.

Atseak had been out with his spear to test the consistency of the snow in various places. If his spear

went through the snow with an effort, then the snow was fit for building; if it penetrated easily, the old hunter knew that the patch needed treading to the right consistency.

With a contented look upon his wrinkled face Atseak returned and presented his report to Nanook and the rest. This patch was good, that was indifferent, the other was bad and would require much treading; and so the hunters had a mental map of the various kinds of snow, and each resolved where he would build his winter home. There was no need in that simple and trustful community to stake out claims. Everything was settled amicably and definitely.

The site for winter quarters was carefully chosen, with a knowledge handed down by many generations and gained by numberless hard fights with Nature, and with a view to all emergencies. The community needed not only warmth and safety, but also to be near the sea-shore, so as to be within easy reach of their winter larder, which was the ice-clad sea. They must be near fresh water too, to save labour in fetching it in bad weather; they required the shelter of the rocks, to break the force of the gales and enable them by easy climbing to get a quick and comprehensive view of the frozen ocean and the hunters scattered over it. They must be able to give help quickly in times of danger or disaster; at the same time, they must not be too near the gullies through which the snow drove in every storm, as this would mean being buried in deep drifts and much labour in cutting themselves out. Nor did the tribe forget that

with the rise of the snow surface their meat and other valuables, usually placed on a high snow pedestal, would come within reach of the dogs, wolves and foxes that were constantly on the alert for opportunities to help themselves.

All these points had to be considered and weighed to each one's satisfaction in choosing the winter quarters. The site finally selected was on a gentle slope, with higher hills at the back and sweeping round to form a natural shelter of break-wind, towards the sea. This also gave easier coming and going over the shore-ice for the sleds—in sheltered spots like these the shore-ice was not broken so much by the fierce tides; whilst a short climb gave the hunters a clear view seaward. The frozen stream close by and the water-hole a short distance away, up the hill, afforded an abundant supply of water or material for making it.

At the foot of the slope there was a space of flat ground on which the people could congregate; the adults to gossip, the children to play ball and other games, and the dog-teams to halt for loading and unloading. Altogether the spot was considered perfect, and it was as carefully viewed and planned as the site for a garden city.

All the families had soon come to an understanding and had received their instructions. The old women were to remain to guard the tents. The men divided into groups of cutters and builders, the women into sledding parties to take the material from the cutters to the builders, and the boys were to make themselves gener-

ally useful. Their idea of this was to get into mischief as often as possible, so that while the building progressed they largely busied themselves in throwing snowballs at each other, burying each other in the snow, or putting up little snow houses for themselves. To add to their uselessness they were missed from time to time, and this meant that the men had to stop their operations, raise shouts of inquiry, and having found or dug out the jovial truants, send them scuttling back to their posts.

At daybreak Nanook and his party gathered round the site which he had chosen for his new house. They probed the snow in every direction and found it of the right consistency, and after that preliminary the building of the village went on quickly and with enthusiasm.

Nanook's wife had joined the sledding party. The old women were given a sense of importance by being allotted the guardianship of the tents. Amongst them was an eighty-year-old widow who because of her years had been put in charge of Nanook's tent, and was proud and delighted with her position, ignoring even the veiled taunts of Seorak and declining offers to share her watch by other grandmothers who envied her her post.

The burden of the building fell on the younger hunters, amongst whom was Kakka, and no one worked more cheerfully than he nor more industriously, for he had a zealous helper in Nappotsee, and when she was not near him her place was taken by Okerlil.

"You are well tended," laughed Nanook.

"Yes," retorted Kakka, laughing also, "where the

hunter is there will the belles be also." He glanced impudently at his assistants in turn, and for different reasons they laughed at his pleasantry.

Nappotsee glanced scornfully at Okerlil as she departed to help with the sledding.

"If she sees you on thin ice," said Kakka, in a low voice, "she will not trouble to warn you."

"Nor should I drag her out if she fell through," answered Okerlil hotly, and with this she hastened to her tent and sought temporary solace in her treasures.

The men, with long-bladed knives, cut and shaped the blocks of snow, looking very workmanlike with hoods well over their heads and long gauntlet sealskin gloves on their hands. The boys were similarly dressed, and to give zest to their operations they had borrowed short skinning knives. Their work was to cut along the edges of the blocks as the houses were built, and to press the loose snow into the joins and make them airtight.

The women had fetched a large sled, to which they fastened a long trace on which they pulled, one behind the other, so that they were able to move heavy loads.

The cutting parties, provided with long knives and saws, had found a hard and deep drift in a ravine and had started cutting long rectangular blocks. Lifting them out, they placed the blocks side by side, ready for transportation, and as the icy masses were wanted they were fetched by the willing women.

Laughter marked the building of the village, and hearing the cheerful sounds Okerlil could not endure the

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

"Cutting blocks from the snow"

solitude of her tent. She put away her treasures, with a final pat, then hurried forth and joined the band that did the hauling of the blocks. For the present she ignored Kakka, nor did she look towards Nappotsee.

"You are one of a good team, Okerlil!" shouted Tooktoo. "Here is a whip to hurry you on!" He threw a snowball at her, but to her delight it missed her and found a target on the plump form of Nappotsee.

Instantly Tooktoo, who was pressing in the loose snow that he was not turning into missiles, busied himself with honest work, and Nappotsee, not knowing who had hit her, but suspecting Kakka, rushed up to him, scattered a few handfuls of snow in his astonished countenance, and fled from his genial wrath.

Nanook smiled or laughed at the pleasantries as he built his own dwelling. He had decided that his present site was enough for his purposes, and calling to his helpers, he marked a circle on the snow large enough to encompass his family and his possessions. Then with a helper he began cutting blocks from the snow inside the circle and fitted them neatly end to end round it, with a slight lean towards the inside. This being completed another ring was added, then, the foundation being finished, Nanook, with a skilful sweep of his knife, pared the circle down to a slope and so began a spiral upon which to build the succeeding layers. Cutting fresh blocks, he now handed them up to the men outside, who quickly, with a few deft strokes, fitted each into its place with an inherited skill which long practice had

perfected. A swift cut, a pat with the hand, and the huge block was secure in position, and strong enough to bear the next layer.

In this way the building of the *igloo* by Nanook and his helpers went on, and other *iglooeet* rose from the ground like this.

The workers went quickly about their task and the material which had been put inside Nanook's new winter home soon became exhausted and the sledding party was called into more vigorous action.

They were sitting in a group on the sled, forgetting their present duty and whispering and giggling as they exchanged confidences of happenings at the Sedna ceremony.

"Hi!" shouted Nanook, and his helpers repeated the hail; but the gossips were deaf to the hails.

"What is that?" laughed one woman to another. "What?" and there were peals of laughter when the answer was given, "I am surprised," added the woman. "How can you know? You are altogether too young."

The keeper of Nanook's tent, listening eagerly, but with feigned indifference, exclaimed, "Yes! How can you know! You are a mere child. Now I, if I choose, could tell something worth hearing." She spoke disdainfully.

"Do you think, grandmother," said Nappotsee, who was with the group, "that you can tell us anything that we do not know?" She shrugged her shoulders and spoke with affected disbelief, and the old woman would

have taken up the scornful challenge had not the shouts of "Hi!" risen again.

"Was there ever such a collection of women before?" asked Nanook genially. "They are like a lot of ptarmigan gathered together. Are we to do all the work? Hi, Nappotsee, do you not want the houses to be built, that you are not bringing material?"

"Aye, hurry up, lazy one," shouted Kakka. "You are handy enough when it comes to scattering snow in people's faces; but your spirit fails when it comes to work."

"Oh," cried Nappotsee, with a flash of her strong white teeth, "it is you raising your voice? I thought it was a baby making a noise. And have you just woke up? We thought you slept, and were waiting for you to wake up. We were just thinking we must come and help with the building, you are so slow. Now then, sisters, let us go and get some snow blocks for *them.*" And without giving the men a chance to retort the women dragged the sled to the ravine, to return with fresh blocks and keep the builders well supplied.

It was not long after this that the last ring of the spiral was built and the keystone cleverly placed in position, bringing the work to a stage at which the boys, climbing like goats, filled in all chinks and cracks.

But with the finishing of the main dwelling only half the task was completed. Another and slightly smaller house was built on the front of the main one. This *suksoo,* or porch, was an important feature. Here over-

flow meetings could be held when a feast was given; here the team of dogs could lie and guard the entrance in comfort. But only those who were known to the dogs could pass in safety. It was as well for strangers to remain outside and call to the inmates to give right of way; even then crawling along between two groups of growling, wolf-like dogs, fiercely hostile to unknown visitors, was an unpleasant ordeal.

On each side of the porch were cunningly-designed cupboards, or wells, built into the snow, their entrances high enough to be out of reach of the dogs. Into these receptacles frozen meat, blubber, spare lines and dogs' harness were put, blocks of snow fitting into the entrances making very effective doors.

In front of the porch another and smaller house was built, forming an extra porch and wind-shelter; its entrance being at the side instead of the front, to check the wind and add to the warmth of the large dwelling. Again, at each side of this entrance-porch was a curved snow wall, the height of a man's shoulders, to form the *okkotak,* or wind-shelter, to keep the winds and snow-drifts from blowing into the interiors.

The whole structure, when finished, formed a well-built and comfortable house, and Nanook smiled proudly as he gazed upon it, while Tooktoo uttered shouts of admiration and slid down the dome-like side repeatedly, until he was stopped by Nanook declaring that if he went on like that he would wear out both the house and his clothing.

"And now," said Nanook, "let us get to work inside."

They took in hand a task which was even more fascinating than that which they had finished, and this was the completion and furnishing of the interior of the main dwelling.

A strong snow bench, reaching from side to side, wide enough for the tallest to sleep upon in comfort, and in height level with the top of the entrance, was made. On each side, and extending to the entrance, were two snow benches, solidly built, the meat and blubber needed for daily use being put upon them.

The benches having been made, the floor received attention. All the broken pieces of snow-blocks were carefully cut up and trodden down until they became as solid as a sheet of ice. Over this glassy surface water was sprinkled, and freezing quickly, there was a floor as hard as cement.

The builders' duty was now done; but while they had been working the glaziers had been engaged on their own special task. This group consisted of old men, headed by Atseak, the grandfather. Earlier in the day they had taken their spears and gone to the fresh-water lake, and with the butts of the spears had cleverly chipped out square blocks of ice and placed them ready for use.

The glaziers had just finished their preparations when the call came for their services.

"Tooktoo, Tooktoo!" shouted Nanook, putting his head out of the porch. "Go and tell Atseak that we are ready for the windows. Ah! There you come, sliding from the heavens! Wait till your mother has to patch

you up! She will take your spear-head from you and hide it."

"But not where I cannot find it," laughed the boy as he scrambled up from the ground, to which he had slidden down the house-side, and ran towards his grandfather to give the message.

Atseak appeared on the skyline, bending under the burden of a slab of ice tied to his back. Using his spear as a staff, and cutting steps when necessary, he slowly staggered down hill to the waiting group.

"You have done well," said Nanook, relieving his father of his burden. "Will you go now and fetch water?"

"Presently, presently," answered the old man, as he beat the snow out of his garments with a wooden beater and freed his beard and eyebrows of their ice-coating by covering them with his palms and breathing into them. He grumbled as he pulled off the particles of ice and gazed with assumed wrath at his grandson. "Yes, presently," he continued. "But I do not wish to be seen doing more of this women's work just now. I am reckoned one of the best builders, yet I have been sent off on work like this."

"Well," said Nanook pacifically, "had I thought of it you should have had your fill of building. But see, while we have been talking Tooktoo has fetched the water."

"Yes," exclaimed Tooktoo, who had rejoined them, "she had it ready melted." He put down a bucket of water, and the glazing went on.

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

"The men's work was now done"

A square hole, a little smaller than the ice-block, was cut in the front and high up in the large dwelling-place, and over this the block was placed. Pieces of snow were dipped in the water, and this semi-liquid material was pressed round the edges, almost instantly becoming a frozen cement which nothing could break. In this simple but skilful way a combined window and skylight was formed.

The men's work was now done, excepting the slabs of snow which they cut to fit into the small entrances already made in each of the houses.

The builders and glaziers now left the *igloo* so that the women could take on the pleasant task of furnishing and decorating the premises.

The chattering band had everything in readiness. Bags of dried heather were brought from hidden recesses and spread, layer upon layer, upon the sleeping-bench, forming a mattress as comfortable and springy as a feather-bed. Large thick deerskins, from last winter's hunt, were spread over these layers, to sleep upon; and around the back were placed rolled-up spare bedding.

Four wooden pegs were next driven into the snow at each end of the sleeping-bench, the front pegs lower than the back ones. These pegs supported the soapstone dish forming the lamp used for light and cooking. Around them four longer uprights were fixed, supporting a semi-circular hoop, filled in with network on which clothing could be dried by the heat from the lamps.

A rectangular stone pot, fitted with loops of whale-bone at each corner, with hide thongs attached to the

loops, was suspended beneath the frame and over the lamp; and then the heating and lighting apparatus was complete.

A block of ice, slightly hollowed, and a section of deer-horn, fashioned into the shape of a hammer, were placed near the entrance, to be used in beating the slabs of blubber for replenishing the lamp with oil; also a receptacle made of a piece of ice hollowed out to hold blood for use in glazing sled-runners.

Two raven's wings, spread and sewn back to back, made an effective feather brush for sweeping the floor, window and ceiling each morning, and it was placed on the bench at the side, ready for industrious use.

The lumbar section of a whale's backbone was put on the floor to form a general seat, and a small wooden box, containing tools and spare parts of hunting implements, was also placed on the floor, to form a spare seat for visitors.

This completed the furnishing, and all that remained to be done was to glaze the interior, to retain every particle of heat. This was done by filling and lighting the two lamps and blocking the doorway with the snow slab. The lamps were left to burn out, which they would do towards the morning. As the temperature rose the surface of the snow on the sides and roof melted slightly, and as the lamps died down the temperature fell again and the surfaces froze once more, having upon them a glaze which would last as long as the house itself.

Now the winter house of Nanook was complete. It had been planned, built and furnished in a few hours.

There, on what had been a barren spot, was the abode which was so perfect that if Nanook had known of notice-boards and the legends they bore he could have put one up saying, "This very desirable residence to be sold, or let furnished. Vacant possession. Children not debarred."

But Nanook had no thought of letting go what he looked upon with pride and joy, and there being no house agents to disturb his peace of mind he with his family entered into peaceful occupation, Tooktoo being the first to wriggle his way in and give a whoop of welcome.

While the groups were building the houses for the chief men and their own families Seorak and Okerlil were engaged on a dwelling for themselves, and they worked rapidly, for the witch had great experience and the orphan was strong, enthusiastic and willing, apart from her fear of her mistress's tongue.

The witch did not need a large house, and she had a sharp eye for a good site. She pitched upon a snow-drift near the new houses, and taking possession of it, she cut into the drift and used it as the back of her abode, and by doing so saved much work. She then built sides and a front to the part she had hollowed out, and soon had the *igloo* well advanced.

There were plenty of spare blocks in the ravine where the men were cutting, and Okerlil, on a small sled, brought a constant supply of them, keeping Seorak well occupied with her building; and as the house grew the witch's temper became less sour.

"Hi!" cried Seorak to a boy of Tooktoo's age and temperament named Koogloo. "Borrow a spear and go to the water-hole and cut a little window for me."

"That I will!" exclaimed Koogloo. He rushed away and borrowed a spear and while he was still under the witch's watchful eye he made a great pretence of going about his business; but as soon as he was out of her sight he began a joyful practice of spear-throwing, after which he crawled over the ground looking for imaginary seals. Sometimes he came across an imaginary seal-hole, and then his pleasure and excitement were at their climax, for he speared through the snow after the manner of a real hunter.

Koogloo forgot the witch and her window for two hours, then he recollected both and cut a block which he considered suitable to his strength and the requirements of Seorak's new home, and fastening this to his shoulders he trudged back.

The witch and the orphan had finished their own work and were waiting for the boy. They saw him coming, and as he drew near Seorak smiled grimly, for he was telling everyone he met how hard the snow was, how blunt the spear, and how, though only a boy, he had undertaken a man's work.

"There were so many chopping out windows before me," declared Koogloo generally, when he saw the witch's eye upon him and was conscious of its power, "that I thought I should never cut my own. There is something like a window!" he added, as he joined

Seorak. "It is small, but very good. How it took my breath away!"

"What did—loitering or getting lies ready?" demanded Seorak grimly. "You will tell some fine hunting tales when you are a man! You will be the one to boast of killing bears that were not there!"

The boy, grumbling, began to climb the front of the dwelling, helped by Seorak, so that he could put the window into position for Okerlil, who had entered the house and was waiting for him. She heard the passage of arms between the witch and the boy, but her thoughts were far away. She was resting from her labours and dreaming of the joys that life must surely be opening out for her. Here was a clean and wind-proof dwelling instead of a draughty and squalid tent; a nice *igloo,* as far as it went, but paltry compared with that which she would have when she became a person of importance and a hunter's wife and the leading men would come and offer her their help in building. Yes, she would have a fine, well-equipped house and give feasts when her hunter came home. And still the hunter had very much the appearance of Kakka. And how pleasant it would be when she was still attractive and the mother of fine little hunters like Tooktoo, if Nappotsee was a worn-out unmarried belle and looked a sorry witch like Seorak.

While these dreams were in her mind Okerlil heard Koogloo crawling up the house side with his window, protesting that for every push she gave him the witch gave him two hard pinches; then her fine home, noble

feasts and brave hunter vanished like a flash, and there fell at her feet the boy, the window and broken blocks of the roof.

For a few moments the pair steadfastly regarded each other, then, realizing that no injury to body had been caused, Koogloo collected his wits and said, "Truly your building is weak. That is why I fell through."

Before Okerlil could answer the angry voice of Seorak was heard assuring him that his fate would be to be devoured by a walrus.

Without waiting to hear further what the witch thought of him Koogloo slipped, eel-like, through the doorway and joined a group of laughing men who had seen the mishap, and who went and made good the damage and did not leave Seorak until her house was finished.

The evening being well advanced and the village practically completed the workers ceased operations and went and enjoyed a meal prepared in the tents of those who were better off than their neighbours, and to talk over the doings and happenings of the day. None were left out; the feasts were free to all, for all had been working and helping each other. The boys and girls, going from tent to tent, received their share.

It was during one of these visits that Okerlil met Koogloo, and having had time to think she was able to restore her peace of mind by telling him with unaffected frankness what she thought of him, he for his part receiving much comfort by saying that it would be a glad day for the tribe when she returned to her own people.

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

"The winter house was complete"

After the feast and its gossip all went to their tents, for one of the last sleeps before going to live in the newly-built *iglooeet,* which under the light of the brilliant moon and the glittering stars looked like illuminated alabaster houses.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST WINTER HUNT

On the day following the building of the village many little things were done to complete the habitations. The women went early to their new homes and delighted in the excitement of moving in and settling down. They spread the heather and fur mattresses for beds, fixed the lamps and kettles, and put their meat and blubber into their snow cupboards in the porch for cold storage and safety. They arranged and rearranged everything, talking incessantly, the shrill voices of the old women mingling with the cries of the babies, nestling in their mothers' hoods, and the laughter of the children.

The men had already made places for the safe storage of things left outside by fixing upright poles in the snow and tying to them cross-pieces with thongs. These frameworks were high enough to keep any goods placed upon them safe from wolves and dogs. The erections also held the spare tent-poles, the tent itself and the small *kyak,* or canoe, that was used for floe-edge hunting.

While the summer dwellings were being dismantled and packed upon the platforms for the winter, many canine dainties were left exposed on the ground, and the guarding of these provided a joyous occupation for the boys, who, armed with their fathers' whips, were told off to prevent the dogs from raiding.

As the boys seized the long whips, and with shouts of rapture rushed to their posts, Okerlil, Nappotsee and the rest of the girls were busy removing, bit by bit, possessions to the new homes. These included bundles of furs and sealskins, parts of deer horns and ribs of seal, and things which were regarded by the dogs as most desirable refreshment, and so came under the guardianship of the boys.

Standing with sturdy legs apart the boys flourished and cracked the whips, the dogs keeping beyond range. They knew to an inch what the range was, and were like a band of skirmishers reconnoitring a post before attacking it.

The middle-aged dogs carefully weighed their chances; the greybeards remained lying down, knowing that a raid meant more bruises than meat. The younger dogs, the hotheads of the band, favoured a general rush, presumably arguing that as boys could not properly use the whips, the blows could not be heavy, and creeping along on their stomachs they made a sudden dash.

With cracking of whips and cries of warning the boys suddenly stopped the rush, and more than one young dog acquired wisdom suddenly.

"Ah! Did you see how my whip stopped him?" shouted Segook to Tooktoo. "Nanook himself could not have done better."

Okerlil was passing as he spoke, and saved herself from a cut with the lash only by halting sharply.

"What!" she exclaimed, "Do you compare yourself to the chief? Do you think you are clever with the

whip and able to drive a full team? You will never need a whip. You will be one of those unfortunates who *walk* to their hunting-grounds, carrying your pack and led by a dog on a line, like one who is blind."

In her halt Okerlil had dropped an armful of things, and as she turned to pick up her load and resume her journey to her *igloo* she said good humouredly, "After all, you are not so clumsy as some, and if you watch the men carefully you may become something useful in time."

"My!" exclaimed Segook, as Okerlil disappeared. "Her tongue is as sharp as the cut of a whip. She is a good-looking girl—but what a tongue! I don't think I shall ever want to marry."

When the removals were finished and the new homes arranged the women exchanged visits and compliments and praise, and the boys, free from their guard duties, frolicked and wrestled and threw their fathers' spears at various objects.

Meanwhile the men finished the outside equipment of the village by building solid square pillars of snow, of a good height, with the tops hollowed and hardened with water. These were the outside meat-safes, one to each dwelling; on them spare seals or portions of seals could be placed with safety, for a time. No dog could jump high enough to reach the top. The men then examined their small hunting-sleds, to see that they were in order and that the ivory-shod runners were sound, after which they went in a body to the shore ice, to make a sled-road to the sea by breaking the lumps of ice into fragments

with the sharp butts of their spears, the splintering of the ice sounding clear and ringing in the perfect stillness of the Arctic.

The road when finished looked very rough—like an English road when broken granite has been spread upon it; it would soon, however, become smooth and hard with the constant passage of feet and sleds.

At last the village was completed and there was a general putting away of implements. Knives and spears were stuck upright in the fronts of the houses and the guns were placed upon the tops, where the frost would keep them dry and free from rust. There was a general beating of coats and trousers with *koutaks,* or wooden beaters, to free them from snow particles and keep them dry. The heavy outside coat was hung up on a tall pole outside to allow the moisture to freeze, after which it could easily be beaten off and so save oil, which would otherwise be used in drying the coat inside the house.

The weather promised to be favourable on the morrow and, weary but happy because of their successful work, the Ivaleet retired to bed, to be ready for an early morning start on the first winter hunt.

As the sharp morning air filtered into the dwellings and long before it was light there was a general movement, for spirits were high at the prospect of the hunt.

The women sat up in their blankets and slid into their fur coats, and thus hastily dressed they trimmed the lamps and prepared the clothing of the men and boys, to see that it was dry and in good repair. They bent

the stockings over their knees and rubbed and scrubbed the soles with a stone scrubber. As each garment was finished and turned the right side out it was handed to its owner, who at once put it on.

The girls attended to their own garments and were quickly dressed.

While these preparations were made doors had been opened, to admit the fresh air that was needed to cleanse the foul atmosphere.

Nanook was one of the first to rise, and his wife helped to get him ready for his leadership. He smiled as he looked at his son, and saw that he was very slow in leaving the warmth of his blanket. Nanook meant that Tooktoo should be as hard and clever a hunter as himself, and he was resolved to teach him without mercy. "Son, son, wake up!" he cried. "You are coming with me and there is much to do. See, your mother has your clothes dried and ready. Put them on and harness the dogs; then come and eat."

Tooktoo sat up and rubbed his eyes as he unwillingly obeyed and slipped into his clothes, and without troubling to think of any toilet he joined his parents, who were already at breakfast.

"Come," said Nanook, as he cut off a piece of raw seal-meat from a pile on the bench by the lamp, "eat your meat. It will warm and strengthen you during the day."

At the sight of food Tooktoo's gloom vanished and he ate his breakfast with a good appetite, taking draughts of warm water with his seal.

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

Koogloo

Atseak, not being wanted at present, enjoyed the privilege of his years by remaining in bed and watching from it his son and grandson, giving them both parting advice as they rose to leave and as they went outside.

"Get the harness and whip and harness the dogs," said Nanook, "whilst I prepare the sled." This he did by turning the sled over and scraping the runners free from snow. Having done this he filled his mouth with water from a can and carefully directed a little stream along the runners, smoothing it down with his fingers as he slowly swung his head from side to side, ejecting the water as he did so. The water froze immediately and formed a glassy surface upon the runners, which gave the sled great speed and made the dragging less tiring for the dogs.

Tooktoo's task proved hard, for the dogs had had many weeks of idleness and had become as demoralized as human beings are from the same cause. They were as unwilling to wake up as he had been, and there was not the inducement of breakfast to overcome their reluctance. True, they had eaten their supper and felt all the better for it; but that seemed long ago, and they realized that there would be nothing more until the evening, on their return from hunting. They longed for some scraps, however wretched, to be thrown to them; but none came, and they obeyed Tooktoo's call and submitted to be harnessed, all excepting one of last spring's puppies. He had yet to be trained for winter sledding and violently objected to harness. The young dog circled round tantalizingly, just beyond reach of hand,

but Tooktoo had no intention of chasing him, and resorted to the trick of fetching some scraps and scattering them on the ground as a bait. The dog, losing his head, and imagining that the gods had given him the good fortune of an early breakfast, dashed at top speed upon the fare, only to have the harness slipped on him by Tooktoo before he could swallow even a morsel. So that the lesson of obedience might be more severely impressed upon the memory of the wrongdoer he had the mortification of seeing the scraps given to the trained members of the team.

While these preparations were being made there was general uproar, the men and boys shouting and the dogs barking furiously, while howls rose as refractory dogs were bitten or shaken by their leaders.

When the dogs were harnessed they lay spread out, waiting for the command to go, and watched over by the boys. Bearskin rugs and fur bags for the hunters' feet were firmly lashed to the sleds by lines, and the guns and spears, which the wives had brought out to their husbands, were slipped under the lashings. The long hunting-knife and the spear-head attached to its line were fastened to the uprights at the end of the sled, and a drinking mug was not forgotten. Each hunter also took a small bag containing a large ivory needle, with thread, and ivory pins as large as nails, for use if a seal was caught; then, slipping their ammunition bags, containing cartridges and flint and steel, over their shoulders, the hunters were ready.

There was no show of emotion, no farewells, though

the men knew that they might never return, yet their attachments were deep and sincere. Dangers had to be faced in wringing from Nature in her bitterest moods the daily food without which life could not be maintained, and these inevitable risks were philosophically accepted by men and women alike.

Nanook and the chief conjurer were the first to leave, and it was Nanook's loud, strong voice that began the vigorous cries of *Au! Au!*" to which the teams started dragging the sleds towards the newly-made road and into the darkness of the ice beyond.

"*Au! Au!*" shouted Nanook, and Tooktoo joined his father in shrill tones.

Nanook took the whip from his son, and the dogs immediately got up and strained at their collars. A quick push on the sleds with the hunter's feet, to free them from the grip of the snow, and with the men sitting on the sleds side-saddle fashion there was the gliding off and a swift disappearance in the shadows of the cliffs. As the hunters bumped and strained over the shore ice their shouts became fainter, and when they were heard no more the women returned to their homes and went about their duties, and Okerlil, who had watched the going of Kakka, sighed as she rejoined the grumbling witch.

The fleet of sleds were drawn towards the hunting grounds that had been previously selected, clear of the cliffs and out to sea. There was a faint luminosity from the snow and ice, and this, with the starlight, gave a ghostly effect. In this eerie element the teams were

silhouetted like phantoms of the night. Mile after mile the sleds were drawn, stops being made from time to time to disentangle the traces, which, by the dogs constantly changing places, had become woven into the semblance of a thick rope. To a European this task would have been difficult in the semi-darkness, but to Nanook and his fellow-hunters it was easy. They are a dark-eyed race, and affirm that dark-eyed men can see more clearly than the *kabloonaryet,* or "white-eyed" races, as they call the Europeans.

As the sleds moved swiftly to the shouts of the drivers, the Arctic morning broke feebly and slowly until there was a hard blue sky. The outlines of the land were far behind; ahead the dark water-clouds told of the open sea and the floe-edge, and on each side vast areas of ice stretched from one end of the country to the other.

Nanook now drove slowly, his piercing eyes scanning the ice in every direction, while he explained its peculiarities to Tooktoo.

"Look," he said, "this is new ice, and not very thick. There should be seals' breathing-holes in it. If we can find one it will be much easier to get a seal there than at the floe-edge."

"Look! There is one!" shouted Tooktoo, pointing eagerly to what appeared to be an inverted basin of ice on the surface.

"That is an old one," replied Nanook smiling. "See, the breathing-hole at the top is frozen over. The seal has not come here for a long time. But look, there is one ahead. The ice is thin near the top, and the small

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

"The women returned to their homes"

breathing-hole is open. A seal has been here not long ago. A trickle of water has come through where he came up. We will mark it and come back, if the floe-edge is bad." He marked it with his sign known to all the other men, then drove on, and the fleet did not again stop until the edge of the floe was reached.

Telling Tooktoo to drive a little way back and to watch the dogs, Nanook took his gun and placing his spear beside him he watched the water.

Soon the edge was dotted with hunters, patient and motionless, but ready to strike with the swiftness of a flash.

Presently a small dark object broke surface at a point nearest to Nanook, an object with two bright eyes—a seal. At first it was so low down as scarcely to be noticeable, then it rose and sank, and rose again, making hardly a ripple. It was watching Nanook, and he was watching the seal, immovable.

The seal disappeared, but Nanook knew that it would rise again to take a deep breath before the dive. Instantly he was bending on one knee, with rock-like steadiness, aiming his rifle at the spot.

From the bitter depths the seal once more broke surface. The rounded, glistening head came into full view; there was a sharp crack in the perfectly still air, and Nanook's bullet had been buried in the head. The seal began to float slowly out on the open water.

Tooktoo had heard the shot, and when he saw his father stand up and beckon him he knew that it had been successful. The dogs also knew and needed no

urging towards the hunter. They joined their barks to Tooktoo's cries of joy as he drove the team full speed onward.

Nanook hastily threw off the fastenings of the little *kyak,* and launched it very carefully and as carefully got into it. Even to him it was not easy to embark in the frail skin canoe, but he got safely afloat and paddled out to the seal, which he speared and towed back to the edge.

Soon the seal was on the ice, and Tooktoo danced round it with delighted exclamations, for by its size, more than twice that of an ordinary seal, and the peculiar black mark on its back, like a harp in shape, he knew it to be a harp seal. Its skin was useless for clothing, but of value for many other purposes, whilst the meat would supply many meals.

Nanook had indeed opened the season well.

The other hunters had seen the carcass dragged on to the ice and they saw his signal as he shouted "Come you."

They left their hunting and joined him, and gathering round the seal they examined it with experts' eyes, made guttural comments upon its size and condition, and complimented Nanook on his triumph.

"This seal has not been hungry," said one, as he noticed the animal's fatness.

"Yes, a good shot," another commented. "Right between the eyes. But you were always a good shot, Nanook."

A third hunter added, "Yes, there will be many boot-

soles cut from that skin. Annorak will be pleased when she sees it. Some of them will go to the old people, I know, for she always remembers those in distress."

"Yes," replied Nanook, "it is well to follow the laws, and to help the needy. Our guardian spirits will not help us any the less for doing these things." He was already busy cutting up the carcass. He had turned it on its back, and with his hunting-knife he carefully slit the skin from throat to tail. Then he as carefully pared the skin back from side to side and exposed the thick layer of fat with the meat beneath.

The hunters gathered closer, squatting with knives in hand. To each in turn Nanook handed a big piece of meat which he had cut from the seal, and they ravenously devoured the warm, nutritious food, Tooktoo receiving his share and taking his proper place at the feast. As they ate they discussed the prospects of the season's hunt, and the general opinion was that it would be good. The ice had set well and had not been broken up by gales, and so the seal-holes could be found more easily. The hunters had all seen holes and expected to get enough seals for their needs, though not too many at that time of the year. They had also, from the floe-edge, seen seals in the water. A fair winter's hunting was prophesied, and the hunters' spirits rose high, and higher as, at the end of the feast, Nanook followed their custom by cutting a portion of meat and blubber for each hunter, who transfixed it upon his spear. This was to take home, ensuring that no man should return empty-handed to his wife and children. With a

"Nakokpotit"—"Thou art worthy of thanks"—to Nanook they scattered to their places on the edge and resumed their watching for seals.

Nanook gathered up the remains of the carcass and with his ivory pins secured the edges, for neatness and safety. The seal was then fastened upon the sled and Tooktoo was told to take the sled farther away, to prevent the dogs from spoiling the hunting.

The reports of guns all along the edge told of a good hunt, and that seals were coming up; it depended on the skill of a man whether the animals were killed or not. To shoot a moving seal with only a little of the head showing is difficult, and several of the hunters missed their targets; but towards the afternoon each man had a seal lying on the ice at his feet. Some, Nanook amongst them, had two, and the hunters knew that for several days at any rate there would be a sufficiency of food at home. Beyond that period their thoughts did not dwell.

Towards evening the men prepared to return, and with their equipment and the seals securely lashed, the dogs, to the encouragement of shouts of "Go on! Go on!" dashed forward with the sleds, though their greatest inducement to speedy travel was the knowledge that at the end of the journey supper awaited them and a warm sleep in the porch or buried in the snow outside.

Nanook swept along, sitting behind his son and allowing him to drive, whilst he corrected his faults and pointed out the various points of the coast-line and answered Tooktoo's questions.

As they drew near to land they saw another sled moving rapidly in from another direction, and knew that it was Sukkenuk, who had gone off alone to investigate a fresh hunting-place which he thought might prove successful in case the others failed. He came up, and it was seen that his sled was loaded with seals.

"You have found a good place," shouted Nanook, as the conjurer drew near.

"Yes," replied Sukkenuk. "A good place indeed. We shall have plenty of meat this winter. Did I not tell you so?"

The home run was made more rapidly than the outward journey. As the hunters drew near to the landing-place their coming was reported by the children, who had been long watching for them. They were ranged on the edge of the shore ice, and when their keen eyes saw the fleet they jumped and shouted shrilly, to add encouragement to the straining dogs. The teams needed no inciting; they had smelt the village long before seeing it, but they were glad to hear the children's welcome, and even that of the puppies which had been left in camp. These were not yet strong enough to be harnessed to the hunting sleds, but they were well able to trot down to the shore ice and climb to the tops of boulders of ice or squeeze their small fat bodies between them. Their yelps added to the general welcome, so that the return of the hunters was a triumph.

It was low tide, and the approach to the village had become difficult and dangerous. The newly-made road seemed to have dropped out of existence. In its place

was a sheer wall of broken ice, twenty or more feet high, with huge crevasses. The wall would straighten out with the rise of the tide; but meanwhile it had to be negotiated, and the climb was stiff and dangerous. It was easy to slip and strain or break a limb in those great cracks; but men and dogs attacked the obstacle fearlessly, the men and boys climbing out at each side of the sleds, which they hauled along as they found a firm foothold. Shortening the traces, they allowed the dogs to scramble ahead, then, urged by whip and voice, the teams pulled the sleds up the icy wall, until with a final shout of encouragement from those in camp and a last heave by the men, dogs and sleds conquered the parapet and raced home over the flat ground, the children swarming on the sleds for a triumphal ride and the puppies yelping as they rolled and rushed towards the *iglooeet.*

That night, when feasting was ended and Nanook had paid tribute to the general prowess of Tooktoo, he told the tale of one of his best dogs. In his eagerness to get home the dog had pulled his hardest, but in jumping from one block of ice to another he had been hampered by his trace and had fallen short and down a crevasse. There he hung by his harness, scratching desperately at the ice wall with his paws. The wise old leader of the team, said Nanook, noticed the danger instantly, and returning, allowed his long trace to hang down the crevasse, within reach of the struggling dog below.

"And so," added Nanook, "talking in his own lan-

guage, as dogs do, the leader explained, and the dog below gripped the line in his teeth. Then, with a long, strong, steady pull, the leader drew his brother up to firm ground, shook his shaggy coat, wagged his tail and trotted back to his place at the head of the team."

"Yes," observed Atseak, "he had proved himself worthy of it."

"And of the extra supper that he got," added Tooktoo.

CHAPTER V

THE RAID BY THE WOLVES

WINTER had come, and the tribe of the Ivaleet had taken up their quarters in the snow houses. There had been many full and many empty larders, days of satisfaction and days of hunger, all taken philosophically. When meat was plentiful the tribe forgot the times of starvation, and when hunger gnawed they spoke of the hours of plenty, and drew pleasant pictures of their prompt return.

The hunters had returned from a meagre chase and were trying to forget their disappointment in sleep. But they moved uneasily in their slumbers. Their muttered ejaculations told of troubled dreams and of the subconscious mind suspecting danger. The women and children were more at rest, for they were the last to be the sufferers from any shortage.

Outside the dogs whined, grumbled and snarled in their sleep, and there was a general uneasiness in the air, which in savage countries is a sure warning of the need to be on the alert, and that danger, though unseen, is very near.

The hills seemed filled with ghostly dogs. All around the village, in and out of the hollows, gaunt, noiseless white shapes flitted; eyes glared from behind the rocks, and it seemed as if a spectral pack which had

been killed in the chase moved backward and forward, open-jawed, with dripping mouths, and eyes scrutinizing every spot where danger might lurk.

It was a pack of Arctic wolves, driven by hunger to contemplate an attack upon their dreaded enemy man. They had fared well during the summer, when small game and birds were plentiful, and when there were always pickings to be had from the abandoned camps of wandering Eskimo. But the hard, relentless winter had told as heavily upon the wolves as it had upon man. The ordinary resources had failed, and game and birds were scarce.

The deer had gone up the hills as the snow-drifts deepened in the valleys, for it was easier higher up to scrape away the comparatively light layer of snow from the moss upon which they fed than to dig for it beneath the deep drifts in the lowlands. The deer only occasionally needed to come down to the shore to secure a salt-lick, a medicine that kept them in good health.

The wolves knew all this and followed the deer up, but very warily, for none knew better than they the fighting spirit and keenness of sight and scent of the buck on guard over the herd, and the fatal effects of a slashing blow from the shovel-like antlers. But sometimes the cunning of the wolf triumphed over the courage of the deer, and the pack cut off one of the herd and satisfied their hunger for the time. But of late the foraging had been unsuccessful, the wolves had become hungrier, and at last they had undertaken the forlorn hope of attacking man himself—man, who had so many

means of guarding himself, the gun, the spear, and the knife, and who outwitted even the resourceful wolf.

So it happened that the ghostly pack haunted the outskirts of the village, their fierce eyes comprehending everything, their minds calculating the chances of a desperate encounter with the hunters they had watched returning the previous evening, the hunters whose trained eye only could detect the forms that flitted from rock to rock, so like them in colour as to be invisible to ordinary vision.

The wolves had quivered with excitement as they saw the sleds unloaded, and they growled and rumbled deeply in their throats as they watched the hunters come out with chopped-up meat to feed the dogs; still more did they hunger as they thought in wolfish fashion of all the good things inside the houses. They had marked where the dogs slept, buried in the drifts, and knew that though the houses themselves were full of peril and held too many weapons against them, yet a ravenous wolf was more than a match for any dog, however well fed, and was even equal to two if the dogs were taken unaware in the darkness.

There was another important element in the wolfish calculation, and that was the advantage which the pack would gain by a surprise attack, a swoop which would draw the men in haste from their houses and cause confusion and consternation in the village. In that time of excitement dogs could be killed, and wolves, dashing into unprotected dwellings, could snatch at precious stores, or even the children, and rush for the shelter

of the hills before the guns and spears could get to work amongst them.

The village was deep in its first sleep when Ameroo, the leader of the spectral pack, gave the signal for the raid. He was a heavily-built, gaunt fellow, nearly full grown, the top of his head a darker colour than the rest of his body, which gave him the appearance of wearing a cap. This was the kind of wolf that usually acted as leader, an animal that had fought his way up through the pack until his fellows recognized his superior cunning and skill in conflict. His position was unchallenged. Ameroo had led surprise attacks on solitary hunters whose fate had never been more than guessed at by the tribe, and he had successfully organized and headed raids on encampments. Many hunters, Nanook amongst them, had vowed to destroy Ameroo, but so far the wolf had escaped.

Knowing all the perils he ran, yet knowing too that the wolves must raid or perish, Ameroo at midnight gave the signal for attack, and instantly the spectral band, with him at their head, charged the sleeping village in a swiftly moving mass that nothing checked.

The frenzied, howling pack swept down from the hills, and as soon as the houses were reached they dug up the dogs, who had buried themselves, and dashed into the porches and flung themselves with slobbering jaws upon the dogs that guarded these entrances. Wherever a dog was to be rushed or routed out there a fierce fight instantly took place, and the snow was reddened with the blood of the combatants. Many a dog

was killed and torn to pieces, but more than one wolf was seized in a grip as deadly as his own, to become the prey of his famished brethren.

The sudden uproar caused by the attack, the howls and barks, and the commotion of the struggling, powerful animals, shocked the hunters into instant action.

At the first alarm the men dressed hastily, a matter of moments, then, seizing rifles, spears and knives, they rushed from their houses and joined in the affray. Their coming added to the din, for in the darkness wolf could not be distinguished from dog, and as in times of such excitement the Eskimo does not stop to think of what may be between him and his target, more than one dog shared the fate of a wolf. The hunters aimed at sound, and as sounds were universal there was a promiscuous fusillade.

"This is the work of Ameroo, and he is here!" shouted Nanook. "He shall never get back to the hills! Ah! I see thee." He fired point-blank at a gaunt form which rushed from behind an *igloo*. The animal's momentum carried him, even after the bullet had pierced his heart, to Nanook's feet, and not till then did the hunter see that he had shot the leader of his own team. But the disaster served to steel his courage and steady his aim.

The women, knowing the peril of standing up in their houses or going outside, remained in their places, lying down, and leaving the fighting to the men. They listened anxiously to the sounds that rose from the warfare, and crouched, half sitting, upon their sleeping-benches, knife in hand, ready to guard themselves

against attack from either savage wolf or frenzied dog that might enter the *igloo*.

Tooktoo, who had armed himself with his spear, posted himself at the entrance to the main dwelling, assuring his people that they were safe, for he would drive his weapon into any animal that came in out of the darkness. He had scarcely put himself on guard when he heard a scuffling at the outer porch, then a sound as of a form pushing through the entrance.

With a loud cry of mingled terror and excitement, yet giving an assurance of safety to his people, Tooktoo waited until he saw an awful head within easy touch of him. Instantly he raised his spear and drove it into the creature at random. There was a piercing howl and a driving forward of a body, and in frenzy Tooktoo withdrew his weapon and again stabbed at random with all his strength. This time the spear was torn from his grasp as the animal collapsed and remained motionless on the ground.

"A wolf! A wolf!" shouted Tooktoo, "and I have killed him with my spear!" He began to drag the carcass into the room, but his mother warned him to keep away from the jaws, telling him, too, to leave the body where it was, so that it would be a protection until the fight was over.

"And that will be soon," declared Annorak, "for I hear the wolves howling in the distance. They are running back to the hills."

"What is left of them," said Tooktoo; "but there are many like this. I will make more certain of him," and

he once more struck hard and skilfully at the motionless carcass.

The sounds of wolf and dog and gun were dying down, and Nanook shouted that the pack was beaten and had left some of its dead behind. Wolves which had been torn and mangled in the fray were still about, dragging themselves back to the hills and trying to escape from the dogs and to avoid attracting the attention of man. Of the two enemies they feared the hunters most, for the dogs were willing to let them go and see the last of them.

Nanook's quick eye spied the slinking form of the wolf leader. The gaunt animal had received a bullet which had crippled him and made him limp and drag himself along.

Ameroo knew that he was seen as soon as Nanook noticed him, and he knew too that unless he could make one last desperate effort he was lost. He gave a spasmodic rush forward, then stumbled, and before he could recover Nanook was upon him.

"Now you are mine at last!" shouted Nanook, raising his rifle. "Never again shall you lead a raid. Ah! Would you!"

With a last snarl Ameroo tried to spring, but Nanook's trigger had been pulled and the wolf leader lay stretched on the snow-clad ground.

Nanook took his knife and made sure that his enemy was no longer able to molest him, then, seizing the carcass by the hind leg, he hauled it back in triumph to his *igloo,* and there he learned of what Tooktoo had done.

The rest of the hunters were returning, some bringing back a dog which had been killed by the wolves, others bringing in a wolf which had been shot or destroyed by dogs.

Nanook, like the rest, accepted the result of the affray stoically. He and the other hunters threw down the body to be skinned, the skin to be cured and used for sled rugs, the body to be eaten, in the case of a wolf, or thrown to the ravens if a dog.

Death had stalked very near to some of the sleepers that night, for several of the houses had been pierced by stray bullets.

Seorak's house had been pierced twice, and she was heard angrily proclaiming that it would have gone ill with the tribe if she had been injured.

The men meanwhile entered their homes, closed up the entrances, and were soon rolled up in their blankets and fast asleep, as though nothing unusual had happened.

"You have indeed done well," said Nanook proudly to Tooktoo. "You have helped to give us meat and to drive the wolf pack back to the hills, to look for game that is less dangerous than the hunter with his gun. Yes, the pack has gone; but Ameroo is not leading it."

He smiled upon his family and went peacefully to sleep.

CHAPTER VI

THE FOX

SEORAK, the witch, was not the only poor person in Nanook's tribe, nor was hers the only mean dwelling in the village. In every Eskimo community there are members who cannot support themselves successfully, nor maintain their wives and families.

On the outskirts of the Ivaleet village was the *igloo* of Terraginearkut ("The Family of the Fox"), the head of which was Terraginear, the Fox, himself. And he was well named, with his small stature, pinched, mean face and little glittering cunning eyes. He had a wife and child, and she often upbraided him for his lack of skill in hunting; yet she refused to leave him, as the custom of the tribe allowed.

The home of "The Family of the Fox" proclaimed the condition of the occupants. It was bare of everything except necessities, and even those were almost worthless. The bedding was old and scanty, one lamp only—Terraginear could not afford two—warmed and lit the abode, and the clothing was soiled and old, since the Fox seldom brought home skins. He possessed an ancient muzzle-loading gun, with a broken stock roughly mended, and the barrel bound to its bed with copper wire. The weapon was a dangerous thing to use, but such as it was the Fox was proud of it and propped it

up at the back of the *igloo,* as an ornament and some evidence of wealth. A sealing-spear and knife, both old and in bad condition, and a few tools comprised the rest of the Fox's stock-in-trade and gave him the means of supplying his larder. He helped the scanty results of his hunting by doing odd jobs for the leading families, such as Nanook.

The Fox's wife was a hopeful woman who was always overcoming disappointments and expecting prosperity in the chase. She earned many a meal for herself and her boy by acting as charwoman in the village and doing her neighbours' rough and heavy work. Her life was not all gloom and disappointment, for she kept herself well informed by picking up gossip in the *iglooeet* she visited. This strengthened her position with some of the people, especially Seorak, whose gifts of witchcraft did not put her above listening greedily and adding to her own store of private information. The charing too gave opportunity of repudiating sinister tales that were told of "The Family of the Fox," one being that they ate dogs, which no Eskimo will do unless driven to it by desperate need. It was particularly alleged against the unfortunates that they looked better and happier coincidently with the mysterious disappearance of several fat puppies.

"Where's the Fox that killed the puppies?" asked Kakka laughingly, and the Fox laughed also, but looked cunningly at his tormentor as he answered, "Ah! Then it was the wolves, after all. I thought I heard them howling in the night. The puppies must have

strayed, as they do. Ah, those wolves! What a curse they are!"

"Yes," said Kakka, laughing still, "especially when they are on two legs. Try your own property next time." He alluded to a decrepit dog which shared the miseries of "The Family of the Fox," and whose mode of getting a living was as great a mystery as that of his master.

Terraginear had returned from the first winter hunt empty-handed, excepting a small piece of meat on his spear which Nanook had given him, just enough for one meal. The oil was low, and his wife, as she shifted her boy from her hood and rolled him in her fur blanket, longed for better times. She looked forward to the day when her husband would prove himself a man and build up the fortunes of the family, so that even she, in her turn, might have someone to attend her dwelling and do the charing.

As she built her castles in the air she listened to sordid realities. Her husband told how he found seal-hole after seal-hole, but that they were all old ones, frozen over, and no longer used. Towards evening he had come upon a promising one, and had waited for the seal to rise. It came at last, "and I struck through the ice-cap and down the hole with my spear," he declared. "I missed it only by a fraction of an inch, and all because my guardian spirit was no good, not powerful enough to bring the seal to my spear. But I will get another spirit, a bear, like Nanook's, or the spirit of a walrus."

"Do that," said his wife eagerly, "and then indeed Kakka will not dare to ask you where the puppies go when they stray."

"Yes," continued Terraginear, inspired by his success, "a walrus it shall be, and nothing less. He will beat the evil sea spirits, guide me to the right places, and put strength in my arm and quickness in my eye when I strike with the spear. I will see Sukkenuk about it."

"But there is his fee," his wife reminded him.

"True," admitted Terraginear, somewhat crestfallen, "and it is no light one for such a performance."

"But you will do it, of that I am sure," said the woman enthusiastically. "Why, I remember you as a good hunter like Nanook. I remember your good sled, your big, strong dogs, your bright, sure gun, your never-failing spear and your *kyak* which all men envied. It was that hard winter and your illness which threw you back. These and your worthless spirits have kept you there. Get the walrus spirit, and then you will not have the boys throwing dead ravens down and telling you to catch them before they fly away."

"I would sometimes as soon spear them as a seal," snarled Terraginear. "But wait till they see me my old self again, and then they will change their tone and beg rides on my sled and pieces of my meat. It is, after all, the doing of my bad spirit, and I will not rest till I have got rid of it."

"That is the best thing to do," answered his wife. "Now let us eat and talk of the way we shall do it."

They ate their meagre supper and the Fox became more cheerful and communicative. "I have had luck even to-day," he went on. "Nanook saw some seal-holes as he returned. They are not too far away and look fresh, and he says that I may have them."

"Ah! It is one of his many acts of kindness to those in need. May he be long protected from harm, by land and sea. And you, my very small one," said the Fox's wife, turning to her little son, "you shall go with him and learn from him, like his own son Tooktoo, and so you will become a famous sealer and a man of power amongst the Eskimo."

The very small one heard the voice and responded by rolling towards his mother, gurgling with delight, to be picked up and hugged by her before being slipped into her hood. When put into his nestling-place he jumped up and down and pulled her hair and did many other things expressive in all countries of infantile delight.

Terraginear's hopes rose and his determination grew stronger as he saw these signs of happiness, and he smiled as he wiped and oiled his gun and weapons, so that the poor equipment itself seemed to take on some of the new-found brightness in "The Family of the Fox." There was a warmer feeling at his heart, and at that moment he would have been indulgent towards the worst boy in the village. Within himself he vowed that, spirits permitting, he would go forth on the morrow and return with a seal. The mere thought caused exultation, for a seal would mean that he, even he, the despised

and pitied Fox, could bid his neighbours to a feast, that he could be the patron and not the patronized. His last vow as he went to sleep was, "To-morrow I will try the new holes."

On the morrow, quietly, without waking his wife or boy, breakfastless, because there was no food, the Fox slipped into his very old deerskin clothes and went forth into the darkness and the cold. He slung his gun horizontally across his back, with a dogskin mat and a large deerskin bag for use whilst waiting at the seal-hole. He started, accompanied by his unwilling dog, which went ahead on a trace.

Terraginear was the first hunter away that morning, and he looked forlorn and melancholy as he trudged onward, the ice rapidly caking on his eyebrows. Very soon the sledding parties overtook him and swept past, shouting words of encouragement.

"Luck be with you!" cried Nanook, who was carried past in something like grandeur by Tooktoo, who gave a piercing cry and a crack of the whip as his own message to the lonely figure.

At daylight Terraginear reached the spot mentioned by Nanook, and his hopes and spirits rose as he noticed that the holes had been freshly used and were in good condition. "The seal has only lately gone away, and is not frightened," murmured the Fox. "There could be no better place than this little sheltered bay, with a good feeding-ground beneath, and nothing to frighten the seals."

As he made his arrangements he resolved to remain

until he got a seal, however long and exhausting the task might be. Quickly and quietly, for sound travels far under water, he cut snow blocks and built a semi-circular wind shelter behind which he could crouch whilst watching the hole; next he cut a block large enough for a seat. This he fixed by the side of the hole and spread his dogskin mat upon it, knowing that the cold, intense though it was, would not penetrate the skin during the long hours which might have to be passed in waiting. Then, slipping his feet in the fur bag and tying it round his knees, to protect his feet from freezing, he sat down with his spear, with head and line attached, across his knees, bringing his hood well over his head and face, and tucking his hands into the sleeves of his jacket. In this way Terraginear protected himself from the elements, and prepared to sit immovable as a statue, whilst he watched and listened for the slightest movement at the hole, not daring to lose, by sleeping, the chance he had travelled so far and laboriously to secure.

The time passed slowly, but Terraginear waited with stoical patience. The dog, curled up behind him, was as patient, nor did he make any more movement than his master. The weather changed, bringing a stronger wind which howled around the lonely pair. Fine snow, whipped up by the wind, lashed the Fox's face; but still he sat, doubled up, over the hole, while the dog sought shelter by crouching nearer to him.

In such a raging gale Terraginear could not hope to hear any breathing should a seal come, and he fell back

upon his skill and knowledge to help him through the crisis. He plucked one of the long hairs from his head. It was like a strand of horse-hair, and this he secured across the opening, knowing that should a seal come to breathe the hair would be blown backward and upward, and in this way give the needed warning.

Another long wait, then Terraginear's fox-like eyes glittered and he held his breath, for a little water trickled from the ice-cap, caused by the head of a seal coming up, while the hair itself, rising and falling, showed that the animal was really present.

He longed to strike, but he knew that a blow at present would be futile, as the seal was too deep down, with only its nose at the surface of the water. It was waiting for the sound of any suspicious movement, ready for an instant dive, a dive swifter than the Fox's spear-thrust.

Seemingly lifeless, but with every sense alert, Terraginear waited until he saw that the seal had put its head fully into the hole, and was breathing regularly and deeply at the opening. Slowly and noiselessly he grasped his spear, rose, and poised it, his eye calculating the spot at which to strike. Then—the spear was struck straight at the centre of the hole, and the barb was buried in the neck of the seal. With a swift movement Terriginear detached the shaft and the seal dived for safety, trying to get rid of the embedded weapon.

Terraginear rapidly paid out his line. Bending down, he passed it over his knees, to check the rush and prevent the seal from diving too deeply. The contest

soon became a tug-of-war. The Fox knew by the pull on the line that he had speared a large ground seal, and his anxiety to hold such a precious catch a sure captive made him forgetful of the weakness due to his long wait and fasting. His resolve was such, his new-born longing to re-establish himself in his former position in the tribe was so strong, and his conviction that this was the doing of his guardian spirit was so great, that he vowed he would be dragged into the sea itself rather than let go.

The old spirit once more filled this wretched man who had become almost an outcast from his tribe. He fought until the perspiration trickled down his face, and it seemed as if his weary arms would fail him, like his fainting body; but the spirit of necessity, the thought of his wife and boy, and above all, that yearning to be once more amongst the hunters, steeled him. A song of victory seemed to rise within him as little by little he hauled in the line, and he gave a groan of mingled triumph and thankfulness when at last his prisoner came to the surface and gasped for breath as it prepared for another dive.

Reversing his spear, the Fox broke the ice-cap and uncovered the hole, revealing the head of the seal within. One or two swift blows on the head made the victory his; but not till now did he rejoice audibly. He shouted for joy, and the dog with prolonged barks shared his delight.

Quickly enlarging the hole, Terraginear dragged his captive out of the water, and gazed upon it proudly

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

"His eye calculating the spot at which to strike"

and almost incredulously. The seal was a fine, well-nourished animal, and it would need all his strength and that of the dog to drag it home. He made a meal on the spot from the carcass, and gave some scraps to the dog, after which he began his journey home, dragging the seal by his fastened spear-line, and helped by the dog.

"Home! Home!" cried Terraginear to the dog, and both began to drag the carcass slowly towards the village.

The rest of the hunters had gone farther afield, and the Fox was the first returning man to be seen approaching the village. Word was passed round that the weary victor was none other than the Fox himself, with a large seal. His wife was in a transport of joy, and set to work to prepare for him and to make ready for the feast for which she now hungered.

Panting, exhausted, but overjoyed, Terraginear entered the village to a rousing welcome. "We will wait till the men return," he said, "and then share the meat. Alas! Our small home is not big enough to invite them to a feast in it, so we must send the meat to them."

Soon the sledding parties began to return, and the Fox and his wife rejoiced secretly, for with one or two exceptions the hunters had come back empty, so that the news of the Fox's good fortune came as a glad surprise.

Terraginear felt that indeed he had found himself again when he had cut up and distributed the seal and saw that all had their share of it, Nanook, Sukkenuk,

Seorak and Okerlil amongst them. He heard the exclamations of thankfulness and praise, and in his present triumph forgot past miseries. This great hour had come sooner than he had hoped, and it was none the less a satisfaction because he could for the time dispense with the services of the conjurer and save the fee.

CHAPTER VII

NANOOK'S EVENING PARTY

MIDWINTER brought to the Ivaleet village times of uncertainty and inaction. For some weeks life had been normal, with fine days during which hunting was possible, and stormy days when all that could be done was to remain in the *iglooeet* and make the best of an irksome imprisonment. The traps were visited whenever it was fine enough to reach them and a sufficiency of food came in from day to day.

Nanook had his share of lucky trapping, and it seemed as if the Fox would never need the mystic help of Sukkenuk. It was to his amazing gun that a wolf had fallen, and the carcass had been brought in and shared round when food was running very low, and it was he who had speared another seal and shared that too; so that with those and hares and foxes the tribe had subsisted and the day seemed near when "The Family of the Fox" would have lived down even the evil days of the vanished puppies. The Fox himself was no longer miserable and isolated, but held his place with the best. He had got fresher and better clothing, his *igloo* now had two good lamps, and his wife had made it known that her own domestic duties prevented her from paying professional visits to other homes. "The spirit of the walrus is in you," she assured her husband,

"and as for me I now fear nothing." And in her joy she hugged her fat little boy until he gasped for breath.

There were days when heavy southerly gales filled the air with driving snow and piled up broken ice high on the floe-edge, and on these days nothing could be done to fill the larders. The men were forced to do that which of all things they hated most—stay indoors and kill time. A gloomy period had befallen them. For days dark clouds had hung over land and sea. No water was visible anywhere, proving that a gale was raging in the south and bringing in the ice and breaking and shaking up the main floe ice in every direction. Huge cracks appeared, opening and shutting with the tides, and there was a groaning and muttering in the air as though Nature herself was in torment. So dense was the atmosphere that the ground under the feet, to any distance, was invisible, and even the most skilful hunter might fall over the edge of an unseen ravine. For hunting or sledding the ice was full of perils. Cracks might open and cut off retreat, or wind and tide change and cause whole fields of ice to break away and drift out to sea, taking hunters and dogs with them, and making return or rescue almost impossible.

On these hopeless days Nanook and the rest of the men stayed at home, mending old weapons or making new ones, doing anything that lessened boredom. Every morning they rose early and slipped on their clothes and brushed the hoar frost from the ice-windows with a raven's-wing brush and looked out, hoping to see a break in the storm; and they had grunted disgustedly,

"It is still bad weather." Their trouble was to pass the hours. They created work. They made trodden paths to the different points of the village, a never-ending task, for after each fall of snow the paths needed fresh treading; but the men were thankful for the occupation which the useless work gave them. They repaired the outsides of their houses, and saw that their porches and wind shelters were in good order.

Terraginear had not yet fully risen to the heights of his ambition and some of his weaknesses clung to him, especially as the storms somewhat undermined his resolutions. He set to work to repair his dwelling, and as the easiest way of doing this he cut blocks from the nearest pathway, where the snow was hard and made good material for repairs. His clothes were still too thin to keep out the cold, so he went to the nearest spot for his blocks. This happened to be one of the main paths of the settlement; but Terraginear took his chance and hoped that in such weather no one would venture abroad. He finished his repairs and then retired to the warmth of indoors, leaving the holes unfilled. Why fill them, indeed, he reasoned, when the fall of snow would do it for him? True, the holes were pits for the unwary at night, but the dogs delighted in them, and found them welcome sleeping-places. His own dog thought so, and as soon as his master had vanished he took possession of a hole and curled himself up for warmth.

The drift soon made a light and treacherous covering, deceitful to the eye, and the Fox was not surprised when he heard howls and snaps and furious comments,

and judged that Seorak had been driven by the weather to forage and in returning home had stumbled into the unseen hole and roused and incensed the dog.

Terraginear, comfortable in his *igloo,* heard the commotion. "Hark," he said, smiling, "the witch has fallen in. Surely, being what she is, she should have known that the hole and the dog were there. But she did not. Yes, she has fallen in. Wonderful!" And with this he dismissed the matter from his thoughts, and watched his wife as she busied herself in making sewing thread from sinew, in readiness for making or repairing clothes. In this dull task he was kept company by all the men in the village, who did not know what else to do.

Nanook knew, as well as his more civilized brethren in more favoured climes, how demoralizing and depressing inactivity becomes, and he was a firm believer in doing something to relieve the tedium of waiting. He set great store by the preservation of old customs, especially those that kept alive the spirit and traditions of the tribe. His house, as befitted the chief, was the most roomy and comfortable in the village, he was renowned for his kindness and generosity, and there was always a wish to share his hospitality and such entertainment as he could provide. One of the greatest attractions was the absence of such sinister influence as that which was assumed to be inseparable from the abode of the chief conjurer.

Nanook, himself as weary of the bad weather as any man in the village, decided to give the equivalent of a party, and at short notice he made his preparations,

after consultation with his wife. His guests were in movement towards evening. Lamps were lowered, children or aged relatives were left as guards over houses, and a chattering, happy band crowded the chief's home. Amongst the guests were Seorak, fully recovered from her fall in the hole, Okerlil, Nappotsee and Kakka. An overflow party was simultaneously given by Sukkenuk, and to that Terraginear and his wife were bidden. Both went, temporary provision having been made for the baby's comfort and safety. These arrangements enabled the visitors to banish from their minds all thoughts of the weather and the prospects of hunting.

Nanook's party included the younger members of the tribe, for it was his wish that the men and boys should learn orally things which they would not otherwise know. These younger men listened admiringly and enviously to tales told by their elders, as if casually, of the chase and how they had overcome dangers; and to none did they listen more eagerly than to the reminiscences of Atseak.

Kakka had held some of his hearers spellbound, and his tale lost none of its force because of the impression it made on Okerlil and Nappotsee. The two girls were separated by Segook, who was seated between them, and from time to time as the spirit of mischief took him he slyly nudged a neighbour and whispered compliments to Kakka.

"Now, tell us some of the things *you* know," said the youths to Atseak.

"Well, then," replied the gratified old man, "I will tell you of an adventure that happened long ago—before I was born."

"That was indeed long ago," interrupted Seorak sourly.

"Nay, let him go on," said Nanook, anxious to keep the peace, and there were cries of protest and of, "Yes, let him go on; we wish to hear him."

"Many winters ago," continued Atseak, pointedly ignoring the witch, "when game was more plentiful and our people were more numerous than they are now, two hunters decided to go to the hills for winter deer-hunting. They had plenty of summer deerskins for clothing, but they wanted the heavy winter deerskins for blankets; and their wives longed for the white skin from the bellies which make women's clothing so bright when used for decoration.

"Their village was in a sheltered place near the head of a bay. To get to the hills where they expected to find deer they had a long sled journey across the bay over the ice. But this was nothing to them, especially as they chose a time when it was full moon. Provisioning their sleds, they drove to the hills, shouting and cracking their whips. The dogs were well fed, and sped along so quickly that the men felt very full of life as they listened to the rasp and ring of the sleds on the hard surface. Up the valley went the hunters, to the hills that towered above them.

"When they reached the deer-grounds they placed their offerings to the gods of the hills and deer in the

crannies of the rocks, and then searched for tracks. As I said, deer were plentiful in those days, and the hunters soon found tracks of a herd.

"The men stalked the deer like shadows, with their bows and arrows ready. They were fine marksmen and always waited till they could aim at vital places. So first one deer fell, without a sound being made, and as the other deer went on feeding, not knowing what had happened, the hunters had soon killed as many deer as they needed. They skinned them and loaded up their sleds with skins and joints, placing the remainder beneath a cairn of rocks for future use.

"You can imagine how cheerfully the hunters got ready to go home and how quickly they travelled by the light of such a moon. They could see their way for long hours, and their voices rang out as they told each other that every minute took them nearer to their village.

"But it was not long before the sounds were heard no more and the men began to look back anxiously, for the dogs, which had been running happily, began to look uneasy and to strain at their harness. They too had been looking back.

" 'Something is following,' said the hunters. Then it was not very long before they cried, 'Wolves!'

"Even as they spoke terrible, long-drawn howls floated down on the still air.

"Already the dogs had been straining at their harness; now, in their terror and excitement, they dashed ahead at full gallop and entered the broken ice.

"The howls grew louder, showing that the wolves were gaining, and the men cried, 'We are being hunted!' The dogs seemed to understand what was said, and they became so frantic that it was almost impossible to control them."

Atseak paused and took breath before he resumed. His hearers, especially the young men and boys, who would some day meet with such an adventure, and perhaps live to tell it, listened in silent awe, and Segook no longer troubled his near neighbours with his attentions.

"You must remember," the old man went on, "that it was a very high tide and that there were large pools of salt water amongst the broken ice. The men stopped suddenly, and choosing a suitable place they built a rough wall around them with such blocks as they had time to cut. The wall was breast-high, and as soon as it was finished the dogs were gathered inside, for with a long journey ahead it was vital to keep them safe.

"The dogs crouched behind the shelter of the wall, whimpering and growling and their fur bristling, for as we all know, there is nothing they hate and fear so much as wolves.

"It was astonishing that so much was done in such a little time; but men work hard when their lives are in peril, and before the wolves came down the valley these men had filled their skin buckets at the pools and splashed the water on the outside of the wall, glazing

it and making it slippery and difficult for the wolves to climb.

"Just as these things were done the wolves rushed in a mass at the hunters and the dogs, believing that they would have an easy victory and a grand feast after it. But the hunters were as swift with the wolves as they had been with the deer, and one after another was shot down. They circled round the hunters and used all their wolfish cunning to get inside the barrier and tear the men and the dogs to the ground; but the only bodies that fell were those of the wolves, and as soon as one of the animals was shot he was torn to pieces by his fellows. This gave a little time, but not much, and as soon as the dead wolves were finished those that still lived made a fiercer attack.

"Now by this time all the arrows were shot away. What was to be done? Brave hunters never despair and are never at their wits' end. And these hunters were very brave. When the wolves were near enough they were met with such slashes from the dog-whips that every blow meant a wound. In this way wolves were crippled; still they madly rushed at the men and dogs and a few fought their way over the glazed wall and into the defence. But now the hunters could use their spears, and no wolf that entered left alive. Again the dead wolves were eaten by the living, and at last the wolves, seeing that they were beaten, and not so hungry as they had been, drew off their forces and retreated to the hills. And the hunters, the victors, lost not a mo-

ment in breaking out of their shelter and flying over the bay to their homes, well satisfied with the result of their hunt, but far better pleased with the success of their stratagem.

"That is a story of the hunters of old, and that is the spirit which will make the hunters of the days to come do things that are as fine and will be talked of just as we are talking of things here to-night."

Atseak drew a long breath as he finished, and his eyes brightened as he listened to the murmurs of commendation.

As the old hunter told his tale Seorak became more genial and she was as loud as any in her plaudits; indeed, the company forgot to fear her and expectant looks were cast towards her. She was waiting for such a lead as Nanook's wife now gave her when she said, "And have you nothing to tell us, grandmother? You have many traditions stored in your memory. Tell us some of them."

"Yes, tell us some," the listeners echoed.

Something of benignity was on the wrinkled face of the witch as she smiled in acknowledgment of the remembrance of her. "Yes," she said, "I know very much of the history of our race. There are many stories of them, for all seasons. We have heard a tale of the winter, now I will tell you one of the spring, how we got the ptarmigan and the snow buntings. You shall hear the story of how the spring birds first came to our people.

"In the beginning of the history of our people, so far back that we have lost count of time, there was a tribe

that lived on an island far to the north of us. They were a happy, big and strong tribe, for the men were great hunters, always successful, and keeping their wives well supplied with furs and skins. The men had plenty of ivory for their weapons and sled runners, and all had children to make music in their homes.

"The children were very happy. Their cheeks were fat and their eyes were black like the berries in summer-time. Never were there happier children than these. Their settlement was at the entrance to a valley, and in the spring-time they loved to go up that valley to play at the foot of the hills.

"At that time of the year, when the sky was blue and the sun was warm, the children knew no greater joy than to go to the hills and climb them, and play hide-and-seek amongst the rocks and slide down the snow-banks. No wonder that the children loved the hills and that the mothers smiled as they listened to the music of the happy laughter.

"But, like so many things that smile, there was treachery behind the pleasant look. In the spring the hills are treacherous, the rocks are cracked by the winter frosts and loosened by the spring thaws, so that the least weight or movement will send a shower of rocks and shale tearing down like a torrent. These dangers should always be remembered, but in the gladness of the spring they had been forgotten.

"One lovely day in spring the children had gone off in even greater spirits than usual, and were soon joyously hunting the butterflies and picking the flowers.

There was no thought of harm; yet suddenly, without any warning, a mass of loosened rock and shale broke away, and some of the laughing children were so deeply buried that they were never seen again.

"The children that still lived, those who had been spared by the spirits, ran home in their terror and told of what had happened in the hills, and the grieving parents hurried off to see what they could do to save their boys and girls. But the hill would not give its secret up, and the work of the fathers and mothers on that vast mass of rock and shale was no more than the tapping of insects on a stone.

"They say that the spirits were sorry for the accident and for the grief they had cast upon the parents, and so they transformed the lost children into the beautiful white ptarmigan and the pretty snow buntings. That is why we get those birds each spring in our valleys and on our hills; and when you hear the ptarmigan calling it is the spirit voices of the children who are playing hide-and-seek, and calling to each other as of old; and when you hear the cheep-cheep of the buntings that also is the spirit voices of the children as they romp and play with one another."

There was silence when Seorak finished, then sighs as women murmured, "How sad!" and drew their own children closer to them and warned them of the dangers of the hills in spring-time. Yet they said fearfully, "Tell us more."

"Yes, another time," Seorak promised, as she rose to

go. "I wish to sleep." She signalled to Okerlil, and the two went off.

The party broke up and the village became very quiet. During the next day there was uneasiness in the village because of the going away of a party of hunters.

The hours passed slowly, and again night came, and those who were left behind slept; but in the early morning they were roused by shrieks of "Come! Come!"

The sleepers awoke and rushed out.

Nanook was the first to get into the open and see that the alarm was raised by Okerlil.

"What is it?" shouted Nanook, though he knew what the reply was sure to be.

"Come! Come!" screamed Okerlil, and she added wildly, "The ice has broken!"

CHAPTER VIII

ADRIFT ON THE ICE

PRIDE and vanity were the causes of the commotion and anxiety into which the community had been thrown that bitter winter morning.

There were at Nanook's evening party some young hunters who were weary of the monotony and inactivity of the last few days, and angered by the references which Seorak had made to the hunters of her own times, compared with those of whom Atseak had spoken. They felt that they were at least as brave and skilful as any of the hunters of old, and when the party broke up they conferred and then announced that they would go hunting on the ice, whatever the consequences might be.

"I shall go, even if I go alone," declared a young hunter. This was Illkaluk ("The Fish"), and he had quarrelled with his young wife, who had vowed that she wished to see no more of him.

"And I shall go," said Kakka laughingly, "even though I am not driven off by a woman's tongue."

There was also Kakkasil ("The Small Hill"), who, being unmarried, wished to perform some deed that would win for him renown in the feminine community.

"We will show them," he said, "that there are men who are not afraid to meet even greater dangers than wolves."

In the early dawn the party had risen and harnessed their dogs and prepared their sleds. Nanook had heard the sounds of getting ready and had gone out to warn the hunters.

"Do not go on the ice to-day," he said. "The gale is still blowing and may grow worse. Wait until it is better; then we will all go. The ice is not safe now."

"Oh, it does not matter," muttered Illkaluk.

"And we know what we are about," Kakka boasted. "We shall come back."

"But how?" Nanook asked himself as the party went off. "Well, they must learn through their own folly." And with a grave face he returned to his *igloo*.

The young hunters forced their way through the shore ice and out to the main ice beyond; and then they saw the effect of the gale to the south. Where the floe-edge had been there was nothing but masses of broken ice, extending many miles. Cracks ran in every direction, like a vast plain of glass which had been struck by a monstrous stone.

The tide was low and the wind was on shore, and so the cracks were closed. The hunters drove slowly and cautiously, hoping to find a seal-hole; all keeping close together and within sight of each other.

Illkaluk was the first to be successful. His anger had died down and he was repentant. He wished also to get a seal and be ready to go back, realizing that a scolding tongue was more easily dealt with than the peril into which they had thrown themselves. He saw a fresh seal-hole in a piece of ice some distance away, separated

from the main floe by a sheet of newly-formed ice which was very thin and dangerous.

Illkaluk left his sled and with cat-like caution made his way across the ice towards the hole.

"He is safely over," said Kakka, who had been watching him anxiously. "Let us too see if we can get something."

Shortly afterwards a shout from Illkaluk announced that he had been successful. A seal had come and he had speared it and was drawing it out on to the ice, where he killed it. "Do not come!" he shouted warningly, for already he was faced with the serious problem of rejoining his companions. The thin ice might bear one man, but it would certainly not bear more. All the support it gave he needed for his own salvation and securing his seal, which he had no thought of abandoning. Illkaluk now put all his energy into the task of returning, and his memory became full of tales of what hunters had done when in danger like his own. He glanced around him, and realized that unless he could save himself he was lost.

"I will do as Atseak told us he once did," muttered Illkaluk. He uncoiled his long seal-line, to an end of which the barbed spear-head was attached, and pushed the spear-head through the nose of his prize. Then with a half-turn he fastened the line round the seal's neck, knowing that such a fastening would bear any strain; after which he made a loop in the other end and slipped it over his neck and arm.

"That is all good," Illkaluk told himself. He glanced

around once more, knowing that it might be for the last time, and then, lying spread-eagled on the ice, he began an exhausting crawl to safety, dragging his seal at the full extent of the long line, to distribute the weight.

The crawl was a desperate adventure, a forlorn hope. The salt-water ice was tough and did not crack under his weight as fresh-water ice would have done, but even so it bent as Illkaluk laboriously advanced and every instant threatened to collapse and let him fall into the sea. His companions had abandoned their own hunting for the time and watched and encouraged him, Kakka's voice rising strong and clear, and his skilful right hand holding a line ready to throw as soon as Illaluk could reach one.

"Keep your eye on us—we will not let you go," shouted Kakka, as Illkaluk crawled nearer. "Now!" Kakka threw his line and it was caught. With slow, steady pulls Illkaluk was drawn to the sound ice, and the seal disappeared.

"It might have been you," said Kakka. "But we will get it in." He and his fellows hauled on the line and the thin ice broke away as they pulled the carcass in and left it at the feet of Illkaluk, who had slowly risen.

"Yes," said Illkaluk, again glancing round, "it might indeed have been me."

"Your wife will know you now as a man of standing," added Kakka. "But look!" His voice had suddenly fallen and he was pointing behind him. "The tide!" he shouted. "And the wind—it has changed!"

A new and more terrible danger threatened them.

The tide had risen and the wind was now blowing off shore. The cracks had opened, and lanes of water were appearing everywhere. To the south was the sea and heavy water, and to drift out there would mean destruction.

Dogs as well as men knew their peril and that not an instant was to be lost. Their floe was large, indeed a field of ice, and the part on which they stood might not yet have separated, or the water-lane might be so narrow that they could bridge it with their sleds.

Hunters and dogs drove in mad haste to one end of the floe, and found that there was no escape that way because of a lane of water; and then there was a frantic rush from point to point, with whips cracking, men shouting and dogs barking in terror, for all around them were lanes too wide to be bridged, and they knew that they were adrift on the ice.

"Yes, we are indeed adrift," Kakka announced. "But we are not lost yet—and it is no use whining. We will make ice-boats!"

"Yes," shouted Illkaluk and the rest. "We will make ice-boats, and in that way we will save ourselves."

"And have another tale to tell to show that we are like the hunters of the old days," cried Kakka cheerily. "Now then!"

Each of the hunters had as part of his equipment a neatly-made oar-blade, with a thong attached, to fit over the butt-end of his spear. This implement was hung over the shoulder, ready for instant use, and now, going to the edge of the floe where the water-line was

narrowest, the men attacked the ice with savage vigour, and with powerful and skilful blows of the iron-shod butts they cut out ice-rafts, each of which was large enough for one man. But that slab of ice was not able to bear a man's weight; therefore another was cut, and being forced under the first piece became a raft buoyant enough to support the hunter.

It was every man for himself, and each hunter worked with desperate and concentrated energy. It was necessary to abandon the dogs and the sleds, all that could be hoped for being that the floe might drift back or touch land somewhere and allow the dogs to save themselves; and there was just the chance that, as the floe would be watched by people on shore, the dogs might be rescued and the sleds recovered.

"Now then!" once more shouted Kakka, when the ice-boats were ready.

In feverish haste they fixed their paddles to their spears and began a journey which was full of danger and difficulty. Balance had to be accurately kept, a delicate task, and paddling had to be done with skill and lightness to prevent capsizing.

The men paddled doggedly, longing but not daring to put forth all their full strength. Their progress was so slow that even Kakka began to despair. "If no help comes we are lost," he thought, but not with his last breath would he have uttered the thought aloud. "Now then!" he shouted once more, "call on your guardian spirits, and keep on paddling." His own mind went back to that party at Nanook's which now

seemed like a taste of heaven itself—Nanook, the guide and friend of all, the wise, seasoned hunter who had warned them of the folly of starting on the hunt. But at that time of utter peril, when Kakka believed that nothing less than a miracle could save them, his thoughts dwelt not so much on guardian spirits as they were understood in the tribe but on Okerlil herself. Nappotsee too came up before his mental vision, but the picture of her was faint compared with that of the orphan from another settlement.

And it was indeed Okerlil who was even then the guardian spirit of Kakka. She had watched him and Nappotsee at the party, and wrath and jealousy had surged within her. She had lain awake, forming many plans, crude and primitive, to circumvent and outwit the belle, and it was while so engaged that she had heard the sleds depart and the voice of Kakka when he shouted cheerfully to Nanook, "We shall come back."

Okerlil could rest no longer. She rose quietly, and leaving everything that Seorak was likely to need within reach of her, she went to the nearest hill and watched the men on the ice. She saw Illkaluk's laborious crawl and noted the widening cracks, understanding the despair of the men as they abandoned their dogs and sleds and embarked on their forlorn hope. She waited no longer. She fled from the hill to the village, and it was her piercing cry of "Come! Come!" which had brought out Nanook and after him the other able men of the tribe.

As soon as Okerlil was sure that Nanook himself was in charge of any measures that might be taken to rescue the hunters she ran home and roused Seorak, who was still sleeping soundly and was unaware of the excitement in the village. Her one thought was of Kakka and his peril, and all she worked for at the moment was his safety. But even in her distress and anxiety she was careful to hide this feeling when, shaking Seorak, she cried breathlessly, "Come! Thou art powerful, and thy help is sorely needed. The young hunters are in danger of death, and thy help is wanted for their salvation." She helped Seorak to rise, and when the witch had left her bed and was standing on the floor of the *igloo,* looking at Okerlil, the girl continued, "You are powerful and equal to any of the conjurors. You know the right incantation. Come! Oh, come! The young men are adrift, and their friends want you to save them. Their families have promised much, and you will receive great respect from them."

As the girl pleaded a smile overspread the lined face of Seorak. "It is not for you to cry," she said. "The hunters are no kith or kin of yours. Still, you are a good girl to me, and I can read your thoughts. What do you say? The young men are adrift? How foolhardy they are! Men are always getting into trouble, and it is always the women who are expected to get them out of it. Yes, I know many of the incantations."

"And you will come?" asked Okerlil eagerly.

"Let us go," answered Seorak.

"I will serve you more faithfully than ever," panted Okerlil, in expression of her gratitude, as they hurried towards the top of the hill she had lately left.

"Yes," mumbled Seorak, "until a better mistress—or a master—claims you. Well, when your own time comes, as it will, see that your tongue has no sting in it. A woman's folly has sent these young hunters out to *that!* Oh, yes! I know what sent Illkaluk out upon the ice. And not a whole tribe of women like his wife are worth it!"

They had reached the summit of the hill, and one piercing glance from her keen eyes told Seorak exactly what the position was. The young hunters needed their minds and bodies strengthened, and the old witch's heart warmed towards these strong young men, of whom at present no one could say that they would live. An instant took her memory back to the long-past day on which her own hunter had been lost in such a way as this—a victim of the ruthless ice. Such power as she possessed she now put forth with all her energy, stretching out her arms towards the sea, her grey hair streaming in the wind and her voice rising as she proceeded with her magic chant.

"O Spirits of the Ice and Sea," the witch began, "release your hold upon these brave young men who are only at the gate of life. Let them be saved! Let them be saved! I, who have power, command it!" She went on in this strain until she became exhausted, and but for help which Okerlil gave her would have fallen.

As she listened to the weird noises which to her were

music Okerlil grew more and more hopeful, and she saw from the renewed efforts which the hunters were making that they too were inspired by the incantation. They could not hear the voice of Seorak, but they could see her, and they knew that she was calling the spirits to their aid. Their muscles were strengthened and their courage was maintained.

"I believe," said Seorak, "that they will come back again to us. Yes, for Nanook and the rest are out."

She was right. Nanook, first to be in movement, was followed by Atseak, determined not to remain indoors when men's work was to be done; and Sukkenuk and the rest of the men were almost as quick in taking up the task of rescue. They asked no questions; it was enough for them to know that the ice had broken. There was bustle as the dogs were harnessed, and grunts and shouts of acknowledgment and approval when Nanook said, "Take *kyaks,*" and instantly began to fasten his own upon his sled. "And remember the lines," added Nanook, setting an example which made a race of the preparations, each man striving to get away first.

Nanook was the most expert and he led the rescuers; followed hard by Sukkenuk and others. "The teams know as well as we do what is wanted," cried Nanook, as the dogs travelled at top speed. They dashed towards and upon the ice, and as they reached the danger area cries went up from Seorak and Okerlil and women who had joined them.

The hunters' strength was failing, and now they were not holding their own. They were being carried out to

sea, and their efforts to help themselves were becoming ineffective. When they knew that rescuers were so near they fought every inch of the way, but it was clear that they were no longer depending on themselves.

"Kyaks!" shouted Nanook, unlashing his little canoe and slipping it into the water.

Sukkenuk did the same, and the two men paddled towards the drifting ice-boats, each fixing upon the man nearest to him.

Now came the crucial moments of the rescue. Gently, very gently, sliding his *kyak* alongside the ice-boat, Nanook held on, balancing with hair-like precision, and telling his man to get on behind. Both knew how dangerous this venture was; but the tired man crawled with Nanook's help from his precarious raft to the almost equally uncertain back of the canoe, yet Nanook was able to give a word of praise and cheer as his man, Kakkasil, spread-eagled on the trembling little refuge.

"Keep still, and leave the rest to me. The worst is over," said Nanook, beginning to paddle shorewards.

Sukkenuk had been as successful with Illkaluk, who still hung on to his seal. Illkaluk was in good spirits, and resolved that he would be the first to reach the shore.

"We have forgotten Kakka!" exclaimed Nanook, looking back.

In the distance Kakka was seen, drifting seaward, and so far as could be told making no further effort to save himself.

Nanook paddled hard and reached the main ice, where

willing hands dragged Kakkasil into safety, and at once Nanook dashed after Kakka.

The first man being in safety, Nanook paddled off towards Kakka and was soon beside him. Kakka was still paddling, but exhaustion was overpowering him.

"Rouse up!" exclaimed Nanook. "Come, but take your time."

He gripped the ice to steady his *kyak,* and Kakka, making a final effort, gained the canoe, on which he lay gasping, with just strength enough to hold the spear-loops and save himself from falling into the sea.

The *kyak* was paddled slowly and laboriously back, with the added burdens of ice which formed on its sides; but the safe ice was reached.

Only Seorak, who had come down from the hill with the rest of the women, noticed that it was Okerlil who helped Kakka from the *kyak.* She smiled grimly, but made no remark, and again smiled grimly when she saw that Illkaluk was being piloted home by a scolding wife, a woman who was protesting that a thoughtless husband had thrown her into a state of needless anxiety.

Illkaluk's seal was being dragged to the village by the boys, and in the general joy no one paid attention to the scold.

The young hunters were weary and silent; but the adventure was at an end and all was well. It would give them something to talk about in the days to come, and at that it could be left.

That night Seorak was specially bidden to a feast

which Illkaluk gave, and she smiled again as she reflected on the uncertainty of human emotions, for his wife was scolding no more, but was in genial mood and looked as happy as her husband.

On departing Seorak possessed a gift of seal meat. As she left she whispered in the young wife's ear, "The smile on your face is better than the sting in your tongue. And which will keep your husband longest near you?"

CHAPTER IX

THE COMING OF THE STRANGERS

FROM the time of rescue the Arctic world seemed brighter and happier to Okerlil, and her standing in the tribe had risen so much that she no longer envied Nappotsee. Seorak's incantation had profoundly impressed the community and many gifts had been made to her. A few of these, which she did not want for personal use, she bestowed upon the orphan, who gloatingly from time to time looked at her growing possessions, which she kept in a wooden box which Tooktoo had made for her.

"You must be growing rich," said Tooktoo. "Some day we shall hear that you are going from us. Perhaps a chief will come from many sleeps away to fetch you."

"I shall not go," declared Okerlil.

"And we may not let you," answered Tooktoo. "Seorak will not, that is certain. She has said so, for she likes you well. And you know that Nappotsee no longer smiles at Kakka, and that *she* would never stretch a hand to pull him on to safe ice?"

Okerlil, did not answer, nor did she look at her boy companion; but something like a grin of understanding brightened his merry face.

"The boys are very fond of you," continued Tooktoo irrepressibly. "Koogloo says that you are nicer than

Illkaluk's wife, and that he would not have her screaming after him if *he* went out and brought a seal home for her. Well, there is your box," concluded Tooktoo. "When the time comes for you to build a house of your own let me know, and I will do all I can to help you." He walked away and joined his young friends, and told them of Okerlil's secret store, and they wondered why she wanted it and what she put in hiding.

The shortest day came and went, the uncertain weather of early winter was over, and there was now the hard blue sky of late winter, darkened by occasional storms. The worst of the weather had gone and the sun from day to day took longer peeps over the hills, and the more he shone the brighter grew the people of the Ivaleet.

One day was as another to them. They had no week-ends. Their year was roughly divided into the four seasons, and by these and the moon they measured time. Moons and seasons were subdivided by regularly occurring events. Thus there was the winter period, when the deer had their full winter coats. This was an important time, for it provided heavy skins for mattresses and blankets and long-distance travelling clothes. There was the period of the fawns and the time, spring, for the coming of the ducks. Summer brought the sea trout up the rivers to spawn; and in the late summer and the autumn there was the great annual deer hunt. Nature herself marked the seasons for the Ivaleet and kindred tribes.

It was told that there were peoples who, having come

in contact with civilization, had heard of white-faced tribes who had Christmases and New Years; but in the Arctic wilds only the old customs were known and followed.

At this time of winter deerskins there was, along the whole stretch of coast and for several miles seaward, a broad belt of ice, so solid and heavy that it withstood the fiercest storms and gave safety for the heaviest loads. The valleys and passes were full of snow, beaten down to iron hardness by the winds.

The time for winter travelling had come and in the evenings the talk was of the prospect of visits from neighbouring tribes, or even small parties from more distant settlements, bringing news of successes and failures, plans and hopes for the coming summer, and the excitement of exchange and barter. There would be messages from the womenfolk to each other, for the Ivaleet had met other tribes in the previous autumn at the great deer hunt, and friendships had been formed and hopes expressed of future meetings. Indeed, all through the winter the Ivaleet had worked in preparation for the coming of visitors.

For some weeks life had been pleasant. Hunting had been good, and the weather clear and bracing. Every man had been successful, some particularly so, and meat enough and to spare had come in daily. In such an atmosphere there was no reason for illness, and the Ivaleet knew to the full the blessings of abundance of good food and pure air.

The old men and women did their allotted duties, the

wives worked hard in cleaning and dressing the piles of deerskins brought in from the autumn hunt; the boys went away with their fathers, learning to play the hunter's part in life, and the little girls amused themselves, or discharged slight tasks while listening to their grandmothers. The little girls were great favourites with the old dames, who handed down to them the lore and wisdom of centuries. At times, when seized with inspirations of industry, they borrowed needle and thread and scraps of fur, and with these they made Eskimo dolls or imitated their mothers by sewing up the holes and rents which constantly appeared in their clothing. They diligently cut and stitched, watched and encouraged by the mothers and praised by the grandmothers. At the finish the seamstresses viewed their work with the pride arising from the feeling that they had markedly advanced towards complete womanhood, and it was not until the small, tired heads were in untroubled sleep that the mothers, with regretful smiles, quietly unpicked the stitches and inserted new pieces of the right size and colour, saying, "She will be more skilful in time." Then the garments were replaced ready for the morrow, when there would be general astonishment, shared by the mothers, and particularly the grandmothers, at the mysterious visits of good spirits who had cleverly finished what the little girls had so well begun.

But the busiest and most excited members of the community were the eligible girls.

During the last autumn the Ivaleet had met a tribe

from the farther side of the coast, and though the young women had been adequately interested in the general welfare of the strangers they had been more attracted by the young men. There had been no ceremonial leave-taking, no shaking of hands, which is not a true Eskimo custom, and no touching of noses, a salutation reserved for kinsfolk and intimate friends and not for strangers. There had been a somewhat obvious pretence of indifference to the qualities and attractions of the young men, but on both sides the juniors had been taking stock of each other, and it was understood that in due season there would be a visit to the Ivaleet settlement.

Feminine tongues were as busy as feminine fingers, and for weeks Nappotsee and her companions had been preparing for possible events. Mothers had given to their daughters enough beautiful dark summer deerskins to make new jackets and trousers, with lovely fawn skins for linings, while other skins had been provided for boots and soles. Instruction in the making of clothing had been given by the mothers and eagerly absorbed, and little wheedling had been necessary to have strips of white deerskin added for additional adornment.

The girls fashioned their jackets according to fancy, so that there came into being jackets with full skirts to the knees, modern style, and those with long tails, after the ancient custom. In doing these things secrecy was maintained, and no girl knew what another was really doing. In the homes the girls worked busily, and if by chance a visitor came to gossip the work was instantly rolled up for concealment; for had not visitors

a way of noticing things that they should not see and telling things that ought not to be known? Patterns were worked into the fronts and edges of dresses, circular embellishments, dogtooth and check designs, and the favourite Greek key border; but these dressmaking marvels were not to be revealed until the strangers were almost due. Then they were used once or twice for visiting purposes and put away for the great occasion.

Okerlil had but little share in these absorbing preparations, nor had the coming of the strangers the same interest to her as to her companions. There was no mother to give her material nor father to make known in the settlement her desirability as a wife. She was content to accept any garment that would keep her warm, and had no hope of getting a new winter outfit or of impressing a new arrival. Such ambitions as she had she kept to herself, relying for their realization not upon the vanity of dress but that occult knowledge which she was steadily acquiring.

Nappotsee in all these efforts maintained her place as the belle of the tribe. She was resolved to make a great impression on the visitors, and her preparations were in keeping with that determination. Her father was a successful hunter, a man of established position, and he was indulgent, so that she was able to take from his store of skins the choicest specimens. Upon these she worked skilfully in secret and when at last she deigned to appear in public it was admitted that in the way of fashion the Ivaleet had nothing to fear from the coming of the Argvungmeoot.

Tooktoo stared hard, long and impolitely at Nappotsee before he observed, "We shall certainly not be able to keep you with us when the young chief comes. That will not be long now, for it is getting towards the end of the full moon. We have been on the hill-tops looking for signs. I want to be the first to see them."

Tooktoo had his wish. He and other boys had continued to climb the hills, and one afternoon he reported a movement far away, near one of the headlands. In that clear atmosphere, where very distant objects seemed within easy reach, the boys could not be certain what the movement indicated, but they believed it to be a large sled. In that case it would not be an Ivaleet sled, as it was too remote, and the boys, agreeing that in any case the strangers would camp for the night, hurried back to the settlement with the exciting news.

The evening meal of seal stew was in progress, accompanied by ceaseless talk and guesses as to the real significance of the news which the boys had brought, when all the dogs broke into a wild uproar.

"Strangers!" shouted Nanook, as he and the rest of the men hurried out. "The dogs can see them."

The hunters knew by the sound the dogs made that there was no alarm of wolves or bears; the barking had no note of fear in it, and as soon as the men were in the open Kakka, whose sight was very keen, cried: "See! See! There they are!"

Two large sleds were made out, fully loaded with people and goods and drawn by teams of well-fed dogs, twelve or fourteen to each sled. The strangers, who

had not stopped to camp, were rounding the entrance to the bay, and the whole community was thrown into a state of excitement and hospitable preparation.

The mothers hastily arranged to house the visitors, taking upon themselves this task so that the girls could put on their new dresses and do their best to convey the impression that the visit was merely part of the routine of life and in no way disturbed the ordinary arrangements of the *iglooeet.* In addition to making this interesting circumstance known, they were agreed upon the need of giving the visitors to understand that the young ladies of the Ivaleet were in no respect whatever inferior to those of their own tribe, and indeed they hoped that the young men amongst the strangers would have no hesitation in admitting the superiority of the home product.

The boys, scorning all duplicity and weakness, rushed off through the shore ice to the ice beyond to meet the visitors. Whence or why another tribe came was not so much a matter of concern to them as to go as far as possible and lengthen the ride which they could get by swarming on to the already fully-laden sleds.

Tooktoo led this enterprising gang, and he was the first to leap on to a sled and shout an unofficial welcome on behalf of the Ivaleet, at the same time offering quite unwanted services as pilot.

The men had gone forth, and, grave and dignified, stood by the rough places ready to help haul the sleds over and ease the final stage of the long journey which had been made. They particularly noted the speed of

the sleds, the number of people and the quantity of goods, and sharply assessed the quality of the teams. They were anxious to learn all they could even at this early stage, and the visitors, dogs as well as human beings, were very willing that they should learn, so long as the knowledge was to the advantage of the Argvungmeoots.

The visiting dogs were on their mettle, and it was clear to the teams of the Ivaleet that they were rushing onward with a freedom and confidence that had something unseemly in it; therefore, when the settlement was reached the home teams welcomed the strangers with such barks and howls and bites that for some time there was a hideous commotion; and whilst whips were lashed and voices rose, traces were raised and sleds dragged bodily over the last of the rough places until, with a grand accompaniment of whip, shout and howl, the sleds rushed into the flat space in front of the settlement. The teams were quickly slipped out of their harness, and instantly there was a furious but perfectly friendly fight between the dogs, which was maintained until honour was satisfied and the dogs had had enough of bites and kicks and lashes.

In the midst of all this commotion the visitors were welcomed to the village of the Ivaleet.

CHAPTER X

GIVING IN MARRIAGE

NANOOK and his people were not disappointed in their expectation of the visitors, who proved to be a party, headed by the chief and his son, of the Argvungmeoot tribe. The visitors lived at the extreme point west of the Ivaleet, in a country where walrus and bear were plentiful. These advantages made them well-to-do and gave them some importance in the estimation of other tribes. All that was known or had been heard of the strangers had been told and retold in the Ivaleet dwellings, and the unmarried girls in particular had discussed the position, doings and prospects of the young male members of the distant community. It had been expected that the visitors would include the chief and his son, a hunter of renown, and the first thing done by the more eager and expectant of the Ivaleet was to confirm the report that the chief and his son were actually amongst the arrivals.

"*Akshooyootidle*—let strength be to you," said Nanook, greeting the chief.

"And to you," replied the stranger courteously.

"You will stay with me, for I have room," continued Nanook. "And is this your son? Is it Omingmuk ('The Bull'), of whom I have heard so much?"

The chief's son smiled self-consciously, and awkwardly busied himself with his hunting equipment, upon which Tooktoo was gazing rapturously.

"How old is he?" asked Nanook.

"He has seen twenty winters," answered the chief proudly.

"Ah, he is well grown, strong and sturdy, and skilful, I am sure. Some day, Tooktoo, you too will be like him. Now come, let us find places for you. You will stay with me, your companions"—he pointed to another prosperous-looking couple, "will stay with Sukkenuk, who also has plenty of room. The young men had better build a house for themselves for to-night, and we will find places for them to-morrow. Meanwhile we will feed the dogs and my young men will help to build the house. Hi!" he shouted to Kakka and others, "give the dogs a feed and then they will be quiet."

Kakka readily took charge of the duty asked of him, and Tooktoo officiously accompanied and helped him, getting many a kick well home in animals that took the chastisement in very good part, and indeed were prepared to receive numberless blows so long as they were accompanied by food.

As soon as the dogs had been attended to the work of building the temporary house was taken in hand. There were willing and cheerful workers, and the house was speedily built and occupied by a party who were delighted with their reception and the prospect of interesting days before they started on their return journey. Nanook's tribe was as prosperous and important as the

visitors', and this basis of equality made intercourse pleasant and easy.

It had been noticed that the sleds and equipment of the party were in perfect condition; clothes were new and well made, sleds were loaded with bear meat and walrus meat, and with slabs of blubber at the back for the lamps and covered over. Rolls of sleeping blankets were piled on the tops and securely lashed down, while spears and guns were slipped under the lashings in workmanlike fashion, ready for immediate use. The men, clad in their huge winter deerskins, hoods tied tightly round their faces and with gloved hands, with their hair beards and eyelashes thickly coated with hoar frost, looked healthy and imposing creatures; while the women of the visiting party were in every way in keeping with the menfolk.

All these things had been observed during the excitement of reception, and the women of the Ivaleet took care to add to their knowledge as they unloaded the sleds. When the house was finished lamps were fixed and filled with oil and lit, the baggage from the sleds was piled up inside, to be sorted out on the morrow, and the young men installed themselves and enjoyed the comforts provided by their hosts. Their clothes were dried by the widows and unmarried middle-aged dependents of the resident families. This was a willing service, for there were visitors without wives, and who could tell what might happen? Hope rose in some of the attendants that invitations might be given to accompany the party on the journey home. With the

hope was the sure knowledge of what the answer to such an invitation would be. Matters of love and wedlock moved rapidly amongst these peoples of the Arctic wilds, but were binding.

"Come, let us go and eat," said Nanook to the chief, when he had seen that all were comfortably provided for. "You must be hungry after such a long journey."

They turned to go and had walked a little distance when Nanook asked his companion, "But where is your son? I thought he started to come with us."

"So he did," replied the chief with a smile, "but he has seen something which attracts him more than either your company or mine."

They paused and looked back, and some way off saw that Omingmuk was looking with delight upon a group of eligible girls which he had only just noticed. It was to him a romantic development of the situation and to them the triumph of a well-considered plan. While welcoming the new-comers and making friends they had arranged that this apparently chance encounter should take place. The young hunter had been observed and stalked unknowingly, and now, taken aback and glowing with admiration, he forgot his father and Nanook and gazed at the group and particularly at Nappotsee.

The girls had sallied forth in all their glory, and to the eye of the young Eskimo they presented a vision of human and sartorial beauty.

Nappotsee had seen Omingmuk long before he was aware of her existence, and now that they were close to each other the colour mounted to her cheeks.

"Come!" shouted the chief laughingly, and the young hunter very slowly walked towards his father and Nanook.

Neither remarked upon Nappotsee as they joined company, but Nanook smiled as in his mind he compared the fall of the young hunter to the charms of the belle with the fall of a seal to the spear.

Nappotsee was in a whirl as delirious as that of Omingmuk, and thenceforward all thought of Kakka left her. The conviction possessed her that the young hunter would induce her to return with him; the other girls had the same feeling, and for various reasons, chiefly because Nappotsee was too powerful a rival to be pleasant, they hoped that Omingmuk would form that determination, and keep it.

"How long have you been in coming?" asked Nanook, when they were settled in the *igloo*.

"We started at the beginning of the moon," replied the chief, "and have had twenty sleeps. The snow was hard and the dogs were well fed, and as we travelled all day and far into the night we came quickly."

"So you have come to visit us and see this part of the country?" said Nanook tentatively.

"Yes," replied the chief. "I have long wished to come and see you in your own country, and to exchange things with you. Perhaps my son has come for other things as well. He is a grown lad, and is thinking of a wife."

Omingmuk again looked self-conscious, nor was his appearance helped by Nanook's wife saying, "Perhaps

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

Nappotsee—a vision of beauty

his mind is already fixed." She had not been blind to the scene outside, and the young hunter's silence satisfied her that his choice was made.

Tooktoo was on the point of making a remark when his mother, who was near him, put a hand playfully over his mouth, saying, "We do not want to hear you, my son."

The boy plucked the hand away. "I was only going to say——" he blurted.

"Nay, nay," interrupted his mother. "We know what you are likely to tell us." It was a guess on her part, but she suspected that whatever it was Tooktoo had in mind it would be better at that moment that he should not utter it.

"Come," said Nanook, noticing the amazement and disgust on his son's face. "You shall tell us some other time."

"Surely," protested Tooktoo, "I can tell Omingmuk about Okerlil."

Again his mother's hand was pressed over his mouth; but he suddenly twisted his head and mischievously added, "*She* did not strut about and show herself, like some of them; but she is a good girl, and kind, and she has many things put away in a secret place, and——"

"What!" exclaimed Seorak, who was present, listening and watching eagerly. "What is he talking about? It is a good thing for you that Okerlil cannot hear you just now. When I was young children had to listen, and were listened to when they were asked to speak."

Nanook saw that something of a little domestic storm

might burst, and he smilingly frowned upon Tooktoo. "To-morrow," he said, "you shall come out with us, and as we shall be all men together, with no womenfolk, we can listen to anything you have to say."

"And I may let you fire off my gun," said Omingmuk, anxious to purchase the silence of this uncomfortably loquacious youth.

That was enough for Tooktoo, who, so that he should run no risk whatever of forfeiting such a chance, kept silence for the rest of the evening, and when he went to bed dreamt that he was a mighty hunter and shot so many bears that when piled up they looked like a little hill.

The chief's son kept his word, and early next day, before the real enjoyment began, he allowed Tooktoo to fire a shot from his rifle, the target being a rough imitation of a wolf, made out of snow and propped against a rock. Tooktoo, in the presence of envious companions, discharged the weapon, with tightly closed eyes and mouth, and as soon as he had recovered from the shock he hurried up to the target, secured the flattened bullet and took it home, to be kept in safety as a treasured relic of a famous morning. "All that you have to say about the girls," observed the chief's son carelessly, "can be said to me alone, when we are together, and I can tell you tales of some of our great hunters; for after all, the other women do not wish to hear about them."

As a day's shopping, with bargain sales, is to the women of London, so was this day to the feminine mem-

bers of both tribes. While the headmen and conjurers met and discussed matters of moment, and tried to map out the summer's hunting, the Ivaleet women had the delight of seeing the products of another part of the country, examining them and comparing them with the natural riches of their own land. There were loud chatterings and laughs and smiles, and exclamations of admiration or depreciation as articles were displayed by each side for barter. It was surprising to hear how worthless a foxskin was compared with a fresh-water sealskin for which it was offered in barter, and how valuable the two things were once they had changed hands. There was fierce but friendly haggling and bartering by the women, and the men, though quieter in their dealings, were as keen and determined to score well in this primitive commercial contest.

The strangers had brought walrus tusks and bearskins, and these were exchanged for coils of prepared seal-line, guns or *kyaks;* while the dogs themselves changed hands, so that the breed of each tribe might be improved. It was a day to be marked in memory as worthy to be ranked with a season, and at the end of it exhausted barterers went indoors with as much satisfaction as if, at a London sale, they had been the first to fight their way to the bargain-counters. All were happy and satisfied, and the visitors' pleasure was increased by their knowledge that there were still a few things in their possession of whose character the Ivaleet were not aware. These were presents which were

being kept in reserve as parting gifts later on, small articles which would put an appropriate crown on the visit.

They also paid visits to the trading station.

The guests intended to stay for a fortnight before starting on their homeward journey, and this gave them time enough to talk and hunt together, discuss old friends and acquaintances and wonder what changes would have taken place by the time the visit ended.

The visitors had left a line of sleeping-houses along their route, with the entrances securely blocked with snow, and with meat and blubber buried beneath the floor, ready for the return journey. But they were too independent to be a burden on their hosts, and the men joined in the daily hunts and were glad and relieved to know that they were helping to fill the larder. When the day had been successful it was reflected in the greater cheerfulness and comfort of the *iglooeet* and the more rapid and vociferous gossip.

"Have you seen Pooeye and his wife?" inquired Annorak one evening, at the close of a substantial supper. "They left here several winters ago."

"Yes," replied the chief, "they came to us and stayed for a time and then went on to a neighbouring tribe, and stayed with them." He paused.

"Yes," said Annorak anxiously. "And how is he now?"

"He was lost in an accident."

There was silence for a few moments, then Nanook said, "Tell us how it happened."

"It was midwinter," resumed the chief, "and supplies were short, so that our women and children were feeling the pinch. Our men went out every day, but only brought in enough just to keep us all from starvation. There was no braver and no better man than Pooeye, who was always the first to set out and the last to return. Being what he was he was usually successful, and whatever he got he shared with the rest.

"One night Pooeye was returning and had reached the shore ice, which was piled up very high, the rise of the tide being very great. It was nearly low tide, and as he was passing round a huge mass of ice the tide fell lower and the ice overbalanced. There was no hope for Pooeye. The ice had crashed in the twinkling of an eye.

"One moment he was there, the next he was not seen, and we knew that he lay crushed and dead under that terrible weight. We saw it happen, and we tried to rescue him; but what can man do at such a time? We knew that he would be with us no more when we went hunting. Doubtless the spirits were jealous and took him; but as he was such a good hunter surely he has gone to the land of good hunting."

"Doubtless," Nanook commented, "for he died whilst hunting."

"And his wife—what did she do?" asked Annorak.

"She married again," replied the chief, with an amused smile.

"Ah!" murmured Annorak, and the rest of the women, knowing that something was coming, said "Ah!" in chorus.

"Yes, she married again, and to the most lazy man in the tribe."

"Ah!" rose again as a chorus, showing how greatly this development was relished.

"He was good-tempered, which was something; but it did not mean much comfort for his new wife. She was a fine woman, and she liked him. She tidied up his house, and kept it clean, and waited on him, and did his mending; but she refused to put up with his laziness, she, who had had such a good hunter for a husband. She believed that unless a man worked he should not eat, and so she gave her husband nothing unless he earned it. That was not what he had expected, nor what he wanted, but it was better to work than to starve —and she had a tongue. He soon learned his lesson, and the spirit of laziness being scared away from him, he took his place with the other men and became one of the most respected of the hunters. They have gone to a neighbouring tribe, and we hear that they are still respected, that he is a man that is well thought of and his wife holds a good place amongst the people."

"She was always a masterful woman," said Annorak. "I am glad that she has done so well."

"Yes," observed the chief. "You sent us some good material."

"And we may send you some more," said Annorak, smiling at Nappotsee.

Nappotsee turned her head and met the admiring gaze of Omingmuk; whereupon she instantly looked in another direction, only to meet Tooktoo's broad grin.

Tooktoo would have spoken, but by this time he and Omingmuk were firm friends, and his discretion had been assured by the gift to him by the chief's son of a knife. Already it had been arranged that some day, sooner or later, Tooktoo should visit his new friend's people; but it was hoped that they would be able to meet again at the summer deer hunt.

There was no longer any doubt that Nappotsee would accompany the visitors when they departed. The chief, urged by his son and very warmly spoken to by Annorak, had approached Nappotsee's parents; while Nanook talked with her father and Annorak with her mother. Many discussions had taken place, and difficulties which had arisen had been overcome and a satisfactory mutual understanding reached.

Nappotsee and the chief's son knew what was being said and done; but they made no remarks, for they had nothing to do with the matter. It rested with their parents to decide what should be arranged, and all that was expected of them was acquiescence. In any case they were not losers; it was the parents who lost or gained, as the case might be. The knowledge of the young people was limited. They knew little or nothing of the world, such as it was to them; their parents thought and acted for them, and they were allowed by custom to call upon them for help at any time. This being the state of affairs, it was accepted as proper and seemly that final marriage arrangements should be made by parents and that gifts should go to them.

The consenting parties were well prepared to carry

out the preliminary negotiations which were to lead to the alliance. The chief dwelt upon the cleverness of his son, told of his wide reputation, and did not hesitate to speak well of his highly-placed and affluent relatives and his own possessions in the way of clothing and hunting equipment. All these excellencies and attractions were readily admitted, but promptly upon the acknowledgment followed a recital of the charms and accomplishments of Nappotsee. She was the unchallenged belle of the Ivaleet, and her raiment bore witness to the richness of her imagination and the deftness of her fingers.

"Yes," said Nappotsee's father at this stage, "if she goes from us—and even now she may not," a remark which alarmed, as it was meant to do, the chief's son, "it will be a loss to us that we can never make good. She is cheerful and good-tempered, and the home cannot be the same without her. She is just getting useful, and we cannot bear the idea of her loss."

The grandmother, who had been sleeping during this recital of Nappotsee's virtues, was nudged into wakefulness, and understanding what the situation demanded she wept and declared that the girl was her favourite, that she could not part with her, and that she did not know what could be offered as consolation for such a loss.

"Ah! What indeed?" said the parents, shrewdly watching the chief's face.

"Besides," added the grandmother, noticing and proud

of the point she had made, "as I cannot bear to part with her I should have to go with her."

"Nay, nay," exclaimed the parents, in sudden alarm, for the face of the chief had fallen, "you are too precious. You must stay with us. You are needed here —and the journey would be too much for you."

A bargain was struck at last. Some fine tusks and valuable furs, a knife which Nappotsee's father had coveted from the first moment he saw it, a small *kyak* for floe-edge work, a dog, one of the leaders of the team, well-trained and of considerable worth, several coils of line and a bearskin—these actual gifts and a promise, which the parents knew would be faithfully kept, of many other presents during the summer satisfied Nappotsee's parents; and the grandmother's wounded heart was healed by the presentation to her of a woman's handsome knife.

Nappotsee learned that she might consider herself engaged to Omingmuk, that they might visit each other freely, and that she was to accompany the party back to their settlement. The custom was that the girl should go to the home of her husband, who usually for a time continued to live with his parents, she becoming the active help in their household, watched over and corrected by his mother. The marriage, although arranged by the parents, was considered valid and binding by all, and was honourably kept on both sides.

The news of the engagement was swiftly circulated in the village, and immediately amazing stories were told

of the enormous number of wonderful presents which had been given to gain the consent of Nappotsee's parents. There were no picture papers in the settlement to give photographic colour to the glories of the alliance; but the belle failed not to improve the occasion by appearing as much as possible in public. In strict confidence she told all her friends separately that Omingmuk had come a whole month's journey, solely for the purpose of claiming her and taking her away as his bride, nor did she hestate to add that he would gladly have travelled three times the distance to fulfil so high a purpose.

These confidences were at once exchanged by the excited and gratified recipients, who were not in the least surprised or disturbed to learn that what was supposed to be private information was public property. The obvious remedy, which was taken, was to embellish the confidence according to fancy and the power of imagination in the individual.

Okerlil alone held aloof from the gossips, for she was content to know that whatever might be her own fortune Kakka was at least safe from further attentions on the part of Nappotsee. As for that indifferent admirer, he made merry over the event and kindly expressed the hope that Omingmuk had not taken on more than he could carry. At the same time, to show his complete good will, he presented Nappotsee with a treasured skin which he philosophically told himself would be no loss, inasmuch as he had already decided that it would be hers in any case.

A new interest and fresh joy had come to the Ivaleet,

and they made the most of it. For the rest of the visitors' stay Nappotsee was the accepted young queen of the community and the main subject of much consultation and cause of activity throughout the village. She had been fittingly honoured by the chief and his tribe, and her parents and Nanook were resolved that the reputation of the Ivaleet should not suffer in the transaction. All were agreed that Nappotsee should go to her new home with an outfit of the best, and complete in every way, for it would never do to learn that there was so much as an excuse for the visitors or their people to allege that the marriage bartering had been to their disadvantage.

Cutting and sewing became the absorbing occupation of the Ivaleet. A complete new outfit was planned for Nappotsee, including new boots, birdskin socks and fur stockings. Needles were provided, and both kinds of thread—deer and seal sinew, and as important parts of the *trousseau* a woman's knife and a lamp were added.

There was not much time left for all these preparations to be made; but some of the most expert cutters and sewers went daily to Nappotsee's home, and it was hard to tell whether their tongues or their needles went the faster.

It was only when the day of departure actually came, and with it the knowledge that the happy life with her people had to be exchanged for another sphere, that Nappotsee's high spirits were damped. She wept, and others wept with her; but the grief was of short duration, and it was lessened by the fact that the belle was

not going alone. A young widow of the Ivaleet had so favourably impressed a young friend of Omingmuk that she had been invited to join the travellers as a guest, with the certainty of marriage on arrival. The chief had given an assurance, and the widow had accepted an offer of a passage.

At the new moon, in excellent weather, the visitors made ready to depart. The days were growing longer, and there were the sleeping-places all along the route, with food waiting, unless the bears had broken in and helped themselves to the secreted stores—and there was always a possibility that this might happen. If the bears had done this there would be nothing for it but to make the best of the loss and trust to have better luck next time.

The Ivaleet saw to it that they faithfully carried out the Eskimo custom of doing all they could to help the strangers on the first stage of their journey; and now every able member of the tribe attended to the feeding of the dogs and took care that the travellers' clothes were repaired and dried, and that they had enough meat and oil to take them to the first of their sleeping-places.

The sleds were loaded, good-byes said, and parting gifts brought and presented. In this general exchange even Seorak had not been forgotten. The chief had given her some deerskins and material for boots, and they were none the less acceptable and readily taken because Seorak suspected that the donor made the gifts with the object of securing her good will. She was will-

ing enough to show amiability towards most of her fellow-creatures on the same terms.

Omingmuk had given Tooktoo a finely-made bow, with arrows, the bow made from deer horn, split and bound together with plaited deer sinew, and arrows with sharp ivory heads, capable of piercing and killing. Tooktoo danced with delight on receiving his present, and in his longing to go and shoot something almost failed in his duty when it came to joining in the farewell to Nappotsee and the widow, both of whom found the first pangs of the parting hard to bear.

Nappotsee's airs and affectations disappeared, and she showed herself to be the good-hearted girl she really was. She had been very happy with her parents, and there were many tears when she started on the journey into the unknown. But the sorrow of separation quickly died away once the travellers were returning, and it was a great mutual consolation for the two members of the Ivaleet to talk of the relatives and friends they had left behind them and to picture the joys of an early reunion.

That journey was often spoken of because of its success and pleasures. The days passed smoothly, sleeping-place after sleeping-place was reached and found intact, and there would have been the establishment of something like a record but for a mishap to the bride.

One part of the route lay through a passage between two high cliffs. It was a dangerous channel, for at various states of the tide the sea rushed through the

pass with whirlpool force, and it was only by careful calculation and the exercise of all their skill and knowledge that the travellers were likely to get through in safety. Dangerous though the pass was it had to be traversed, because there was no other way of reaching the destination.

In this pass progress was at all times gloomy, for the cliffs were high, and rush of water prevented the ice from becoming thick. There were weak spots here and there which added to the perils of the passage and the need of caution. A sleeping-place was built and fully provisioned at each end of the pass, and a party always waited for the right period of the tide before attempting to get through.

When the time to start came the most experienced hunters went first, a good distance separating each; the dogs and sleds followed, without passengers, one sled at a time, and the women went last in single file, also separated by considerable spaces. The undertaking was at all times a very dangerous one, and there was always rejoicing when it was safely over.

All had gone well with the party until the pass was reached, then the chief saw to it that the usual precautions were taken and that no attempt was made until the most favourable time arrived.

The men had safely made the passage, and some of the women, after being specially warned, had started on the venture. Amongst them were Nappotsee and her friend. While they were on the passage other women were holding the sleds back, and there was growing sat-

isfaction when it was seen how well the journey was being made.

Nappotsee was three parts across, then one of the sleds caught up and passed her. She was full of spirits, and in her exuberance forgot the warnings which had been impressed upon her by the chief and Omingmuk. She jumped on to the sled, meaning to ride the rest of the distance, and her friend, equally thoughtless and reckless, did the same.

Instantly there was an ominous bend and a sinister swish as the ice collapsed, and Nappotsee and the widow were in the bitter water before they realized the price they were paying for their folly.

A full tide would have meant sure destruction for them, for they would have been swept away instantly and drowned; and even now they were in peril and shrieked for help.

Swiftly uncoiling their lines, the chief and his son crawled out on the ice until it bent beneath them; then they threw their lines and the despairing women caught them and clung with the desperation of terror. Hastily crawling back, the chief and Omingmuk hauled on the lines steadily and strongly, and just as hooked fish have been played so were the soaked and shivering pair, until, the ice having broken repeatedly, they were dragged into safety.

The Eskimo is at his best in an emergency, and now the chief's first care was to complete the crossing. That was done, then came the task of restoring the humiliated women to warmth and dryness. It was imper-

ative that they should be saved from freezing, and it was Omingmuk himself who took charge of the cure of his bride, her companion being left to many willing hands for similar treatment.

Nappotsee was firmly but kindly seized and thrown down on the dry, powdery snow and vigorously rolled in it, the white powder acting like the best of blotting paper and rapidly absorbing the wet; then more dry snow was rubbed over the women until they were comparatively dry. After that treatment, corresponding to other countries' methods for the restoration of the apparently drowned, the patients were taken to a snow-house, the lamps were lighted, and while their sleeping-blankets were spread out their clothes were given to the other women to dry. In this way warmth and circulation were restored, and on the next day the last stage of the journey was begun.

"I am glad to see you safe here," said Omingmuk. "It is more than I thought would happen when we were hauling you in like a drowned seal."

"And I am glad to come," answered Nappotsee. "I feel already that I shall be happy in my new home. I will try and show you and your people that it was better to save me than to let the tide carry me away."

And Nappotsee kept her word. She settled readily amongst her new relatives and friends, so that Omingmuk was grateful to the good spirits who had sent him on that long journey twenty sleeps away.

CHAPTER XI

OKERLIL'S PROGRESS

NAPPOTSEE was becoming an obedient daughter-in-law and a dutiful wife and was making headway amongst her new kinspeople. In the essentials of existence there was but little difference between them and the Ivaleet. Both tribes had to fight hard and incessantly with Nature to exist at all, and there were in Nappotsee's new home just the same periods of prosperity and depression that had been known under the chieftainship of Nanook. There were times when Nappotsee yearned for communion with the tribe she had left, and at such times her greatest comfort was to talk with the young widow, now a wife again, and wonder what was happening in the village of the Ivaleet. No news came, nor was any sent, for the distance between the two villages was too great to make more than an occasional journey possible; but every day that passed brought nearer the prospect of meeting again hunters and others from the Ivaleet.

With the going of Nappotsee the position of Okerlil improved, and she was making steady progress in the tribe. She and Tooktoo were firm friends, and that was enough to gain for her the good will of Nanook and his wife. More than one present for Okerlil's secret store was added by Tooktoo, and the boy had established him-

self, in some mysterious way, as a means of communication between the orphan and Kakka.

Occasionally Kakka spoke of Okerlil to Tooktoo, and though the remarks were innocuous, and might indeed have applied to any other young woman in the tribe, yet as interpreted to Okerlil by Tooktoo they were such observations as Omingmuk might have uttered concerning Nappotsee. The chief's son still remained Tooktoo's hero, a hunter second in importance and skill only to Nanook himself, and just as Nappotsee spoke of the time when she should again see her own people so Tooktoo dwelt on the joy of once more meeting Omingmuk and going hunting with him. On one point Tooktoo was emphatic, and that was that Kakka had no regrets at Nappotsee's departure.

"We shall see you a mighty conjurer some day, Okerlil," observed Tooktoo. "It is known that you are learning, and that Seorak tells you some of her secrets. Is it true that soon there will be another conjuration?"

"You have been listening to things that little boys should not hear," replied Okerlil hastily. "Have you had your ear at a sound-hole?"

"Ah! So it is true!" exclaimed Tooktoo. "I know that Sukkenuk is doing strange things, and that some of the young men have been talking, those that think they also might be conjurers. But Kakka is like me—he is content to be a big hunter."

"So Kakka does not care for conjuration?" said Okerlil carelessly.

"He might like yours," answered Tooktoo. "Try it

on him!" And with this he laughed and ran away to escape the friendly blow which Okerlil aimed at him and her own pursuit. She was almost as fleet of foot as the boy, but he was the first to reach Nanook's *igloo* and find shelter.

Okerlil walked soberly back to her own home, where she found Seorak in a state of intense excitement. The witch said nothing, but Okerlil knew that in her absence she had been going through some of her incantations.

"So it is true," thought Okerlil, unconsciously repeating Tooktoo's words. The revelation was troubling her, for it meant that a period of unrest, illness and bad fortune had settled upon the community, and that until there was another conjuration there was not likely to be a return to happiness and prosperity.

For some time after the going of Nappotsee the days had passed pleasantly and there had been a long round of enjoyment. In a primitive community, with no distractions, the visit of the chief and his people had been an event which furnished many talks, and there had been the criticisms of the presents exchanged and speculations of what would happen when the tribes met again; but these topics became threadbare in time, and dullness and inertness oppressed the Ivaleet as the winter slowly passed and the bright spring days still seemed far remote.

Disturbing factors had appeared in the village, and even the most optimistic members of the tribe became affected. Okerlil was subdued and Tooktoo lost much of his spirit. It was as if the leaden sky of the Arctic

which they knew so well in time of evil weather had settled on the Ivaleet themselves.

There had been several cases of illness, some severe and baffling, and the temper of the people was becoming uncertain. Fears and superstitions were rife, and there was much whispering and subdued talking together, so that as great a change came over the people as Nature herself so often brought about on their land and sea. Some of the families were shunned for reasons which no one could have clearly given, and some of the hunters appeared to have lost their skill and good fortune, and returning empty-handed, heard it whispered that their guardian spirits had forsaken them and that they must find new ones without delay.

Kakka was temporarily amongst the unfortunates, but he was a very independent and self-reliant young man, and perhaps he was fortified by the assurance which Tooktoo gave him that Okerlil bore him specially in mind and had secured on his behalf the powerful intervention of Seorak. Certain it was that while other hunters lost heart and drooped Kakka went his way cheerfully, and asserted that just as surely as the sun would come again so would the good fortune of the Ivaleet return, especially with such a chief as Nanook. "Anyway," announced Kakka defiantly, "leave gloom and fear to the old women. If the spirits of the young hunters fail, then we shall be lost indeed." And Tooktoo, who had heard the words, declared to Okerlil, in repeating them, that they were good enough to have been spoken by Omingmuk.

Another jarring element was that Illkaluk had quarrelled with his wife and they were speaking of divorce, while the Fox was falling from grace and giving ground for unpleasant allegations against him. In these troubled times he was not exerting himself, yet he appeared to be contented and well clothed and fed, and there were pointed inquiries as to how he did it all. The Fox refused to give enlightenment, but his wife strove hard to let it be understood that in a general atmosphere of disapproval expressed by the spirits her husband was a favoured exception, because of his rehabilitation of character—a picture of him which was at variance with that which she drew for his own benefit in the privacy of their home.

Why, it was asked, should all these evils fall upon the tribe?

The old women were consulted. They listened in silence, and shook their heads. They did not know, but preserved their reputation for wisdom by saying nothing, or hinting that someone had transgressed the laws and done forbidden things. Perhaps,—who could tell?—the wrongdoers had held communion with the dead, they had thought of and longed to see the departed, and by doing so had held the spirit earth-bound; perhaps they had eaten forbidden things, or had worked on various skins in prohibited hours. That also would displease the spirits and bring calamities upon the village.

This was all the help and comfort the old women could give, and it was not enough, therefore dark ques-

tions were asked as to what the conjurers were doing. Why were they not inquiring into these evils and rooting them out before it was too late? These questions were asked and repeated, and they did not fail to reach Sukkenuk and his assistants.

The chief conjurer became his old self, and as the discontent grew his faith in his own powers increased and he determined to make the most of the situation. He applauded the sagacity of the old women, while deploring their limited comprehension of the trouble. He suggested that the people thought the truth, but hinted that nothing could be done in such a delicate matter without appropriate offerings.

Sukkenuk and his assistants knew well enough that the real cause of all the illness, ill-luck and dejection was the prolonged hard winter, and that with the coming of the sun all the wretchedness would vanish. But it was no part of the conjuring policy to make this knowledge known, for conjurers, like the rest of men, must live and make the most of their opportunities; therefore it was once more necessary to show dominion over even powerful spirits, and to this end steps were taken for another conjuration. Confidence had been shattered in the village. Sukkenuk knew that very well from his own observation, and what he did not know his wife supplied, for she was in constant touch with current gossip.

Sukkenuk took stock of his powers and opportunities as he prepared for his fresh display. He knew that he was more powerful than Sedna, and he had no fear of

his assistants, who were minor conjurers, the chief amongst them being Obloreak. What he had to do was to use them all to the best advantage, and while justifying the confidence which he knew was placed in him improve his standing in the tribe.

There were minor lights, such as those who helped to find out the cause of sickness by leg-lifting and head-lifting. To these humble practitioners pay was proportionately small, and they were satisfied with the gift of such articles as needles, thread and combs; but higher fees in the shape of more valuable gifts were necessary before the utmost powers of the chief conjurer himself could be put forth. Sukkenuk indeed was the brightest star in the Harley Street of the Ivaleet. It was comforting to reflect that all these powers of various sorts could be put forth to the advantage of the community, and that their exercise would not in any way imperil the authority or position of Nanook.

First, then, came the strengthening of Sukkenuk's own ranks. There were in the village several youths who aspired to the rank of conjurer and had applied for admission to that select circle of which Sukkenuk was the head. But aspiration was not enough; there was, even in that community of aboriginals, much hard work to be done before perfection could be reached. There were rites and incantations to be learned and understood, and only by long practice and steady application, climbing from minor office to minor office, could the top be reached at last.

Sukkenuk was shrewd enough to realize that with the

development of trading the days of conjuration were numbered, and that the day could not be distant when these ceremonies would be looked upon, even by most of the Eskimos themselves, as archaic. He had seen something of the changes that were coming over the Arctic, and how the white-faced people, in their trade expansion enterprises, were overrunning the country and introducing the ways and mode of life of other races. He had heard of benevolent designs of a great Government and of law and order being maintained by a powerful band of mounted police.

Nanook, too, knew of these happenings, and indeed was well disposed towards the idea of getting into closer touch with those Europeans who had such wonderful things in the shape of rifles, ammunition and iron and other metal goods to barter for skins.

Therefore, while opportunities were still open Sukkenuk made the most of them and maintained close touch with the young men who still upheld the traditions and customs of the tribe. There were not wanting amongst the Ivaleet and the tribe which had so lately visited them, and now had Nappotsee as a member, young hunters who had heard strange tales of powerful traders and wished to meet them and do business.

The chief conjurer had seen and talked with each promising aspirant and had warned him of the hard tasks that must be done. Some, after the conversation, had fallen out, so that now only likely candidates were left.

Then the office of *Kuneyok,* the holder of which incanted in times of accident and overlooked the safety of the hunters, needed strengthening. Seorak was of this degree, and she was getting old and past her work; but there was Okerlil in the background, and Sukkenuk had faith in the orphan.

Other helpers to be summoned were *Tikkitsertok,* god of the land and owner of the deer; *Ooluksâk,* god of the lakes, who dwelt by the sides of lakes and rivers and gave to Sukkenuk the light by which he saw the misdeeds of the guilty and the power of commanding the spirits of the walrus, bears, seals, salmon and other creatures of the earth and sea and air.

Being the medium of all these spirits Sukkenuk was far greater than Seorak, so that when the notice of the conjuration was given he had faith that all would go well, and that while he maintained his professional standing he would advance his worldly position and gain by his arts what others won by hunting.

When the ceremony was announced there was more hope in every house and talk of ills being inquired into and put right. In preparation for the day Sukkenuk and his wife were busy making suitable charms, the most common being small tassels of deerskin cut into fringes, small pieces of bearskin, and miniature outlines of animals cut from sealskin from which the hair had been scraped. Spiders were sewn up in small pieces of skin, representing the familiar spirits of various animals; and there were other charms. Those who wished to

possess the charms and enjoy the guardianship of the spirit represented bought them from Sukkenuk and wore them.

Sukkenuk himself wore strips of deerskin cut into fringes, each fringe representing a cure he had effected, and the correct number was adhered to. As he ranked high in his profession his coat had many fringes.

When the day of conjuration came Sukkenuk's house was crowded and there were anxious visitors, for though each family could nominate its aspirant it remained for him alone to accept or reject.

Nanook and the headmen were present to support the ceremony and impress the audience with its solemnity. The minor conjurers attended by virtue of their standing, and in some cases to nominate candidates. Amongst these was Seorak, calm and watchful, in contrast with frightened youths who would gladly have lost their chances of successful candidature by flight.

Sukkenuk was dressed in his full ceremonial clothes, and bore the tokens of all the spirits upon whom he could call. He had fasted and otherwise prepared himself for the ceremony, and looked and felt thoroughly in earnest. At this stage, beyond Nanook and the headmen, there were no spectators—these came later—for onlookers were forgetful of the gravity of the rites and disposed to make remarks; besides, Sukkenuk knew the value of maintaining mystery and secrecy, so that it was to subdued and attentive listeners that he began his address. He told the youths that this was no light venture, that there must be purifying, fasting, abstinence

from many desirable things in life, and fortitude in keeping vows. Without this sternness no success could be gained, nor could the candidates become fit to serve as guardians of weighty secrets upon whom the welfare of the tribe depended. He warned the young men that they would constantly be under watchful eyes and that all deviations from duty would be reported to him as chief conjurer, who alone had the power to reward or punish.

Sukkenuk at this stage paused and looked piercingly around him, his gaze lingering on those who, he well knew, would go no farther after what he had said. Slowly and impressively he said, "And now, before you try to pass the threshold of mysteries, think carefully—and do not hesitate. If your hearts fail you, if you doubt your abilities, go in peace. Leave your gifts here and depart whilst there is yet time."

From an early stage of the harangue several youths had looked in growing agitation towards the exit, and as soon as Sukkenuk had spoken these impressive words they rose, mumbled explanations of their high appreciation of conjuring and the hopelessness of their attaining such excellencies and perfection, and, depositing their presents, tumbled over each other in their eagerness to gain the open air and join their relatives and companions.

"It is well," remarked Sukkenuk to Nanook, with a grim smile. "They would never have risen as conjurers. They will do better as hunters."

"Yes," agreed Nanook gravely, "they are more likely

to succeed with men like me, following the chase, than with such arts and mysteries as thine. And we must not offend the spirits by training those whose hearts are not in the conjuring. Now let us go on with the rest. It will please us all that only the best material is left."

Sukkenuk was in more amiable mood. He had eliminated the undesirable element and was now able to address himself entirely to those who might succeed. He found that those who were left belonged to the families of the minor conjurers, so that they would be well watched and taught and doubtless strengthen his own position.

"Well," he said, addressing his hearers as if individually, "I will teach you the minor offices and the incantations for those offices, and in time, if you are diligent, you can rise to other offices. But first I will hear your guilt, and yours, and yours—and see that true answers are given." With this he asked long, searching and trying questions with a firmness that allowed of nothing being kept back; after which he absolved them from their guilt, and they were thankful when he said, "That is the first step."

There was now a feeling that a difficult point had been passed and that the road in front was clear. Outside, the unprofitable candidates were making the most of their discomfiture, and they found receptive listeners not only in Tooktoo and his young band but also in the elders, who numbered Kakka. These formed what might be looked upon as the advance guard of civilization, the Eskimos who saw far ahead and realized that

great changes were sure to come through fostering association with the traders. To them the unwanted candidates expressed themselves freely concerning conjuration, seeking to cover their own ignominious retreat by challenging the use and need of such exactions as Sukkenuk imposed and the soundness of the arts he practised. These were the new critics of the old beliefs, and they found willing listeners.

Meanwhile Sukkenuk was earnestly exhorting and encouraging the faithful. "Take the charms," said he, handing one to each attentive and impressed candidate, "and hang them over your doorways. They will help to protect you. Tell your parents that I will arrange for you to stay with me whilst you learn and until you are proficient. Go, now, and remember what I have told you. You still desire to learn?" he demanded finally.

"Yes," was the answer, not the less readily given because even these chosen ones were anxious to get outside; and leaving their gifts they hastily departed, to be congratulated by their parents and to feel an added importance in the eyes of the community.

Thenceforward the novices would be trained severely. They would be obliged to act as general servants to their master Sukkenuk, doing all his menial work. They would be compelled to abstain from flesh of various kinds for long periods and at certain seasons, and this abstention was specially severe in a climate which demanded the eating of large quantities of meat for the adequate support of the body. There were involved in-

cantations to learn and such mysteries of the craft of conjuration as Sukkenuk saw fit to reveal. An odd feature of the eating while instruction was being given was that it had to be done with gloves on, a severe restriction to those whose tribal custom favoured the liberal use of bare hands to take the places of knives and forks. The hair was to hang loosely, without fastening of any kind, and the novices were to sleep during the period of instruction without taking off their clothes.

In such ways it was sought to train the aspirants to mortify the flesh and rise to a height from which the mind could see, as in a trance and a great clear light, such revelations as the past misdeeds of individuals, and enable them, upon returning to earthly consciousness, to act upon the knowledge which had been gained from communion with the spirit world.

Such high perfection was attainable only by the few. Most of the candidates failed to fulfil their vows and joined the backsliders and the forward movement; but in the cases in which a certain measure of success was reached Sukkenuk provided posts as minor conjurers in keeping with the attainments, so that peace was preserved, satisfaction given, and, what was equally important, a steady income maintained for the chief conjurer.

When Sukkenuk had finished with the aspiring youths he turned to Seorak and asked her to name the person she would wish to have as an understudy.

"She is here," answered Seorak, bringing forward Okerlil.

"I am not surprised," said Sukkenuk. "You have

chosen well." He had known for some time of her ambition and had watched her attitude, and he was satisfied with her conduct. The chief conjurer knew that the orphan had patience and ability, and suspected that Seorak had not kept to herself all the secrets of her calling. Sukkenuk knew too, none better, what the girl's hopes were and how she was adding to her little hoard of possessions, so that she might take her place amongst the well-to-do of the tribe. He admired her qualities and was by no means unwilling to make a special effort to help her.

"Are you sure of your desire?" he asked impressively.

"Yes," replied Okerlil in a whisper.

"You have thought well over the matter?"

"I have," she assured him, more loudly and confidently.

"You have a good teacher," added Sukkenuk, with a side glance at the witch.

"And she is a good pupil," interposed Seorak. "What is told her she understands and remembers, and there are many unseen things that she looks upon with clear eyes. My own are getting dim, and she will be able to act as guide to me."

"Yes," said Sukkenuk gravely, "the day comes when darkness falls upon us all." He turned again to Okerlil, saying, "See, here is your charm. Wear it always. It will help you. And here is another." He gave her a line of fringe. "Hang this over the doorway. It will protect you."

Okerlil, overwhelmed, muttered thanks, and tried to

cover her confusion by holding forth one of her cherished possessions which she had brought with her.

"Nay, child," said Sukkenuk, from whose features all look of gain and harshness had gone, "I do not desire a gift from you. You did well the other day when the men were adrift, and if you are diligent we will make a *Kuneyok* of you, and you will safeguard the men. And you, Seorak—let Okerlil remain with you for the present and teach her all you know; afterwards, when she is ready, I will examine her and see if she has remembered her instruction. I will teach her more, and announce her as a *Kuneyok,* and allow her to practise. Doubtless she will give her earnings to you."

Seorak was well pleased, Okerlil was overjoyed, and the two left Sukkenuk's presence and hastened home, where the witch, becoming more human thenceforward, undertook the orphan's further training at once, heartened by the prospect of reward.

Okerlil that night was in a delirium of joy. One of her greatest hopes had been realized, and now she was on the very threshold of probing the mystery of the ancient and jealously-guarded tongue in which the incantations were uttered. She was glad at the recollection of what she had been able to do for the hunters in distress; but she was not prophetess enough to know that that rescue was almost trivial compared with the peril from which she was to be the cause of saving Kakka and some of his companions.

CHAPTER XII

HEALING THE SICK

"THERE is a better feeling in the village since the conjuration," Nanook said to Sukkenuk some days after the ceremony. "Your charms and incantations have done well."

"Yes," agreed Sukkenuk, smiling. "Life goes better than it did before I called upon the spirits."

"But there are still the sick," continued Nanook. "We cannot be happy so long as there are men amongst us who keep to their beds."

"We must get them out, Nanook. If you are willing to leave them to me I will see what can be done. The good weather is coming, and we cannot go hunting and know that there are those left behind who should be with us. You have no illness in your own home?"

"No," replied Nanook. "We hardly know its meaning. There is my father, but with him it is years, and not disease. Such pains as he has come to us all in time, and we learn to bear them as part of the ending of life. Well, then, I will leave the sick to you."

"And while I am curing them I can attend to other matters also," said Sukkenuk. "I know that there are many grievances of various sorts, and it may be that I can be of service to those who are troubled as well as to the afflicted."

The chief conjurer began his new task energetically. Success had attended his late efforts, and he was anxious that the good impression he had made should not be marred by any failure in his attempts to cure the sick. He knew what all the ailments in the community were, and was confident that he could find a remedy for them, apart from any power which came from his knowledge of the spirits.

Sukkenuk set to work without delay. The sick themselves somewhat dreaded his intervention, but their relatives were relieved and pleased at the prospect of throwing upon the doctor the responsibility which they had been bearing themselves.

A prominent man of the community, Kakkersill, was the first patient. He had been ill for some time, through exposure, wet and careless eating. He suffered pain and became miserable and dejected and a ready believer in the gloomy assurances of his wife and neighbours that he was under the ban of some of the spirits. The more they told him the more he believed, and in proportion to his credulity was his depression. The sick man was losing hope, and that is a fatal thing for an Eskimo. Nanook had remarked on this, and had told Sukkenuk that in any case he hoped that this depression, so harmful to the tribe, could be driven away.

Sukkenuk knew that something must be done, and he knew also that much could be accomplished by rest, warmth, absence of heavy foods, or even the primitive method of a few days' fast. Above all, he understood

the value of establishing absolute faith in himself as a doctor. With this man there was a robust constitution to deal with, and Sukkenuk had good reason to believe that a great deal of the ailment, if not imaginary, was due to morbid dwelling upon its symptoms. Many prohibited customs were practised, laws were violated, and carelessness contributed to further mischief.

Sukkenuk carefully prepared himself for his visit, donning his ceremonial dress and assuming his best bedside manner. It was known that in addition to his powers as a conjurer he had great skill as an anatomist and was a bold and resourceful surgeon, though his methods inspired considerable dread. If there was a swelling to deal with Sukkenuk would order the patient to be held down by main force while he lanced it. The wound was left to heal itself, with a piece of mouse-skin stretched over it and such words of cheer and comfort as he could call to mind for the patient's benefit. If a broken bone had to be dealt with Sukkenuk was equal to the emergency—the bone was roughly bound up and left to knit itself and slowly cure.

The news of Sukkenuk's visit had been made known throughout the village, and when he reached the house he found the patient surrounded by his friends and neighbours, all ready to give advice and express their own views on the situation. Such opinions as they uttered were by no means to the patient's liking or the improvement of his spirits, and Sukkenuk, after assuring the man that all would be well, ordered the visitors to leave, allowing the wife only to remain.

"Turn the lamps down low," ordered Sukkenuk, and the woman obeyed.

In the darkened interior Sukkenuk pulled his hood over his head to hide his face, and while turning his back to the dim lamps he saw to it that such light as there was fell on the patient's face, enabling him to notice every sign that passed over the features.

Answers to a few adroit questions enabled Sukkenuk to locate the pain, then he undertook the more difficult task of discovering what Kattersill had been doing generally and to what extent he had transgressed the laws. Some of the questions had but little relation to disease of any sort, but all knowledge was helpful to Sukkenuk, and he was as unsparing in his interrogations as a cross-examining counsel. Like some distinguished advocates, too, he blundered on in the hope that by chance he might happen upon some unexpected ray of light.

"Have you been guilty of not following our customs?" asked Sukkenuk, bending forward so that the edge of his hood almost touched the face of the sick man.

"No," replied Kakkersill boldly.

"You are sure of that?"

"As sure as a sick man can be," said the patient, wavering.

"Ah! Sickness plays havoc with the memory. If you have tripped in your truth-telling do not be afraid to tell me. Then you have not followed them all?"

"I may have forgotten—but it is so hard to remember." There was a note of protest in the words.

"Come," continued Sukkenuk. "We are all frail, and err. Confess."

The patient was silent, and by his hard breathing the conjurer suspected the wrath which he felt but was afraid to utter.

"Nay," said Sukkenuk, "it is no use to expect your wife to answer for you. Or would you like her to leave us?"

"No," the sick man answered quickly and in alarm. It was bad enough to be closely questioned in the presence of a sympathetic listener, but he would be helpless if left to the conjurer alone.

"Well, then, tell me," persisted Sukkenuk. "We have it that you have not been faithful to our laws. No wonder that the spirits have put this ban upon you." He began to rock to and fro and utter groans.

Kakkersill's alarm grew, but he was not yet enough afraid to tell what he had done, wherefore the conjurer groaned more loudly and rocked more violently, while he once or twice contrived that the edge of his hood should actually touch the patient's face.

"What did you do during the large seal season?" demanded Sukkenuk.

"Nothing!" the patient told him defiantly.

"Did you work upon deerskins, or sealskins, or upon your boots during that season?"

"No, I have done nothing to offend the Spirit of the Seas."

"During the deer season did you hunt for berries, and so offend the Spirits of the Deer and Land?"

"No, nor that. I did none of these forbidden things."

"Did you steal from anyone in pain?" continued Sukkenuk, somewhat baffled and discouraged.

"No," declared the victim, and the conjurer heard a note of growing confidence in the tones. The patient was gaining heart, and smiled faintly at his wife. Instantly, on observing this, the conjurer groaned aloud and rocked so ferociously that the wife gasped in fright.

"Have you told lies to the Eskimo?"

"No."

"Have you scolded and been unmerciful to the old people?"

"I have always been kind to them," vowed the man, "my wife can tell you something of that."

"Yes," interrupted the woman eagerly. "There was that time, not long ago, when——"

"It is your husband, and not you, that I wish to hear," said Sukkenuk.

He now went from question to question, covering a wide ground of possible breaches of the laws, and to all there was a monotonous negative. But he had been merely working up to a climax. He knew what he had come to learn, and this was but preliminary skirmishing.

He paused so long that both the patient and his wife were hopeful that the ordeal was ended, and that Sukkenuk would tell them what to do and then hurry his departure. Already the woman was hinting at a parting gift; but Sukkenuk had not struck his final blow and he was in no hurry to go, nor was he so unwise a practitioner as not to crown a splendid opportunity.

He rocked again and his groans were so audible outside that a crowd collected and listened spellbound, opining that the condition of the patient was desperate, if not hopeless.

"It is not long since you lost a near relative?" said Sukkenuk suddenly.

The dreaded question had come at last, and under the shock of it the patient was temporarily dumb.

"Ah! You cannot say 'No' to *that*," exclaimed Sukkenuk triumphantly. "Come, it is useless for you to hold back the truth, so tell me all. And remember, the more I know the more I can help you. So that is true?"

"Yes," whispered Kakkersill.

"And you have been in communion with the dead?" Sukkenuk spoke in an appropriately hollow voice.

There was a moan from the bed.

"What! You do not answer? Then let me see if I can find out." He rocked to and fro, more slowly, and uttered an incantation, fearful enough in itself to the two hearers, but its terrors intensified because it was in the secret tongue of the conjurers and therefore not understandable by anyone outside their ranks, though intelligible to the spirits. As the weird song proceeded Sukkenuk's frenzy grew, and when he ended and exclaimed, "At last I see it! The spirits show it to me in a great light!" the patient knew that he was lost, so far as revelation went.

"Ooluksâk is showing me! You have been longing to see your relative again! You have been thinking

constantly of him, and longing to see him once more. Is this not so?"

"Yes," groaned the sick man. "I did desire to see him again, not knowing there was harm in doing so."

"It is bad! It is bad!" responded Sukkenuk. "Yes, very bad, for you have interfered with his departure to the good land. He is earth-bound, and in his anger and his desire to depart he may bring calamities upon the village."

"I did not know! I did not know!" protested the patient in real alarm, and his wife, regardless of Sukkenuk, added her voice to his fears.

"Surely you can pacify him," she said.

"Yes," whispered her husband, "surely you are able to release him and let him go his journey. It was not my will to hold him back."

"Well, well," answered Sukkenuk indulgently, "perhaps I can; at least I will see. But first I must find out the penalty and the pay that will be necessary." He changed his song and incanted slowly and impressively. When he ceased he turned to the patient, who had been anxiously awaiting the end, and said, "We must now find out the will of the spirits in another way as well. We will test your head and feet." And at this announcement the hopes of the patient and his wife were dashed, for it meant the introduction of a minor conjurer who had been kept in waiting.

The minor conjurer was a *Mukkosark*—a woman who had qualified to take, or test, the weights of sufferers, and she had with her the main instrument of her office.

This was a loop of thong attached to a piece of wood, and the patient distrustfully regarded both it and her as she stood at his bedside and prepared to do her work. For the moment Sukkenuk allowed her to take the field, and realizing the gravity and importance of the occasion, she was in no hurry to finish.

Passing the loop round and under the patient's head the minor conjurer slowly and seriously went through the performance of weighing that part of the patient's body. For him it was a crucial moment, since her verdict was a matter of life and death. If she pronounced the head heavy then the end was near and sure; so that it was with a thrill of joy that he heard the operator say, "Light."

Kakkersill's spirits rose and bore him through the rest of the trying test.

The woman now inserted the patient's legs in the loop and weighed them. "Light," she announced again; good news, corresponding with the diagnosis of the head, and reconciling the patient to his present lot.

The minor conjurer retired, as pleased as the patient, for she knew that she would receive good pay for her visit.

There was now an impressive silence. Sukkenuk had once more distinguished himself. He knew that the patient was in no danger, and his concern now was to withdraw full of professional triumph and yet with the satisfaction arising from the earning of a substantial fee.

"You have been guilty of a grave crime," he said,

addressing the patient; "but as it was committed in ignorance the spirits will be merciful. When you have performed certain penances you will recover. But now it will be necessary for you to have a new name and start a fresh life. When you are better you will cast away your old name and call yourself Assenuk, and so the evils belonging to the old name will not cling to you. Now I will absolve you from your guilt."

Sukkenuk went through the needful formula, after which he imposed certain conditions, such as keeping to bed for a few days, restricting diet, and maintaining peace; and having given his final instructions to the relieved patient and the now cheerful wife he departed with an impressive air. But before going he had intimated that the head-lifter would call in person for her own payment, while as for himself he named several articles which he knew could be spared and were desirable additions to his own possessions.

The next two patients, being walking cases, were summoned to the house of Sukkenuk. Having cleared off the spectators he seated himself as before, supported by the symbols of his office, and with the lamps lowered.

Each case was dealt with separately. The first was a hunter who had lost his skill and his luck together, and could no longer succeed in catching the seals which he had so often brought home with him. Sukkenuk knew that until the man's faith in himself was restored there could be no cure. He hazarded the cause as some offence to a spirit, and having obtained an admission of guilt proceeded to invoke the guardian *Tongak* and to

call upon him to return to the patient hunter. In the end Sukkenuk, who had worked himself up to a frenzy, bestowed upon the patient the spirit of the walrus. With this and the payment of the fee the hunter's fears left him, and he began a fresh lease of life which restored him to his old position and standing and won for him the warm praise of Nanook himself.

The next and last case was that of Illkaluk and his wife, a matter of difficulty which the chief conjurer handled more with his worldly knowledge than his occult powers. He knew much about this young couple, who had been married several winters, and skilful questions told him more. They were childless, and his wife was ashamed, thinking, like the Jewish women of old, that a curse had fallen upon her and that she was looked upon as an object of pity and derision. They had become moody and quarrelsome, serious evils in the opinion of the Eskimo, and had lost their popularity. Here again Sukkenuk was successful, sending away the pair with good advice and fresh hope, and the assurance that they would live to see sons grow up around them and be a comfort and support in their old age.

The chief conjurer's work was done, and he was relieved and thankful when the strain was ended. His satisfaction was shared by the community, which felt that a burden and a blight had been lifted from the village.

"You have worked wonders," Nanook told him. "Your skill is like the sun that comes and sweeps away

the darkness and restores happiness and joy. Already Illkaluk is talking of the names they will give their sons, and Seorak is boasting that she feels as young as any girl amongst the Ivaleet. It will not be long before you are able to call upon Okerlil to help you as a minor conjurer."

CHAPTER XIII

NANOOK'S TRIUMPHS

THE sick man was well again and going about his business cheerfully. Illkaluk and his wife were living in harmony and growing hope. Seorak was getting reconciled to the thought of resigning her position as minor conjurer in favour of Okerlil, and Tooktoo was distinguishing himself in many ways, and as head of the juvenile community adding much to the bright side of life. Nanook looked with pride on the development of his son's powers, and was taking every opportunity of letting the boy accompany him on hunting expeditions, so that he could qualify himself to act with calmness, courage and resource on the many occasions when danger had suddenly to be faced.

It was agreed that Sukkenuk had been more than a match for the evil spirits, and that in all his doings he had been well supported by his subordinates. One or two of the candidates had fallen by the way, and Nanook was the first to realize that this backsliding was doubtless due to some mysterious influence arising from the development of trading amongst the Eskimos. So far the Ivaleet had been but slightly affected by this activity of civilization, but in the Arctic news carries far and in strange fashion, and the young hunters were talking amongst themselves of the gains that were to be

had by bartering skins with the rich white traders. Knowing these things, Nanook, Sukkenuk and the rest of the headmen of the tribe accepted philosophically the probable coming of a new order; while content to go on living their own lives on the old lines.

"It is better to have a faithful few than a doubtful many," observed Sukkenuk, shaking his head, nevertheless, somewhat sadly as he thought of the lost candidates and the consequent diminished fees. "Those who come through the fire of the tests will be worthy of reward, and an example to those who do not follow the ways of their fathers."

"The seasons change," said Nanook, "and it is not for man only to stand still. Great changes may not come in our time, but the very young will see things that no eyes of ours will look upon. Is it not so? You are better able than I am to look into the future."

"Yes, Nanook, the old order will change; of that there are many signs, and may it be for our good. But I am content with the present state of things. Yet whenever these white traders come near us we must not let them go away without seeing what we can do with them in barter. They have many things that we desire."

"True—and they are always eager to buy our skins."

"There are other things besides that we can exchange; things we make and do not want," said Sukkenuk. "Now at such a time as this, when the hard days are past and there is time to rest, we can make lamps and spears and such-like articles; and we know

that the white-faced people covet our stone cooking-pots as treasures."

"Atseak is keeping his hands busy even now," continued Nanook. "He is making a new lamp from a piece of soapstone. Last summer he found a large boulder of soapstone in the valley and broke off a piece, to treasure against such a time as this, when the larders are full and he can work with a mind at rest. Then he had fashioned an adze from a piece of drift wreckage, and bound the nail he found to the bone shaft with wet thongs. You know how firm the lashing is when these thongs are dry. But come and see Atseak. He is happy all the day now, and seems to grow younger as the spring comes nearer."

They walked to Nanook's home and upon entering they saw the old hunter working industriously and cheerfully. With his semi-circular slab of stone on his knees he was chipping away the shallow interior. The task would take many days to finish, but such a lamp as he was making was always useful, either in the home or as stock for future barter, when the tribes met.

"You are keeping your hands and mind well occupied," said Sukkenuk genially.

"Yes," returned the old man, "and by doing that I keep such as you out of employment." He smiled shrewdly at Nanook, who laughed.

"You are bold to say such things to those who doctor us," said Nanook, dubious as to the reception of the jest; but Sukkenuk was at peace with all the com-

munity, and was not disposed to take amiss remarks from Atseak. He let the observation pass, as the best way of dealing with it, and commented favourably on the old hunter's handiwork. Further pleasant words were exchanged, then Sukkenuk departed, and Nanook cleaned and reassembled his gun, that wonderful weapon which would never have been his but for dealings with traders.

As Nanook performed this task he looked from time to time at his father, who, when he had finished the lamp, intended to make a cooking-pot from another piece of soapstone which he had roughly marked out. At present it was a shapeless mass, but when it left his hands it would be a splendid oblong cooking-pot, with sides as thin and regular as if the pot had been worked by machinery. It was a tribute to the skill and patience of the craftsman, yet as he admired his father and rejoiced in the old man's delight at the growing triumph of his hands, Nanook had again those vague thoughts of how inconsiderable even their most wonderful productions were compared with the gun he was cleaning—and were there not the tales of articles in common use amongst the white-faced peoples in far countries that were infinitely more marvellous than any gun the Eskimo had ever fired? The reflections were shadowy enough to be disturbing and not strong enough to give hope or comfort, wherefore in his simple philosophy Nanook banished them from his mind and dwelt more particularly on the present prospects of the community. He wondered, too, what steps should be taken

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

A successful fisherman

to make the next great deer hunt a success and maintain the reputation of the Ivaleet.

It was one of the happy days of the village life. Illkaluk had seen the tracks of several hares and had followed them up. Other hunters were scattered about the neighbourhood, looking for the tracks of deer or bear, and Tooktoo and the other boys had climbed the nearest hill to hunt for lemming or ermine, or at any rate to see if there were any signs of these animals.

Tooktoo had his bow and arrows with him, and his keen eyes swept the world around him. Looking seaward, nothing was visible except the dark mist at the floe-edge and bergs and ice-boulders scattered about the ice in every direction. Looking landward, he saw the series upon series of hills, black and white in their winter coating.

Illkaluk could be seen in the distance, stealthily stalking the hares, and as Tooktoo and the boys watched him they saw a little puff of smoke and heard a faint report.

"He has shot one hare at least, for he never misses!" shouted Tooktoo. "He is certain to shoot more. Let us look and see who will be the first to see the smoke again."

The boys all swept the view again, most of them concentrating on Illkaluk; but Tooktoo's more roving eye wandered more or less idly seaward. He had glanced at a large ice-boulder not far from the nearest point. The boulder should have been embedded in the pack, and stationary. The sun shone through a break in the

clouds and Tooktoo's casual glance had become a searching stare.

Surely, thought Tooktoo, the boulder moved; yet who had ever known the ice to move like that? Then a wild idea flashed into his mind and he shouted, "Look! Does it not move?" His voice trembled and his outstretched hand shook in excitement.

"What is it? What is it?" shouted the boys. "We know! It is *Oolorksâk,* the Spirit of the Ice, and it is coming towards us!" Their tones had changed to terror and without waiting for further enlightenment they turned and fled to the village.

Tooktoo was the first to fly and the first to reach the village, and tumbling into his home he breathlessly told his tale to Nanook, who had finished his work of cleaning and was gazing fondly at his beloved gun.

"Show us the way and we will follow," he said, and hurrying out, he found that the rest of the hunters had assembled at the alarm and were ready to go. They had their weapons with them, and soon, keen-eyed but with the caution that was part of their nature, they were on the summit of the hill, watching the strange object that Tooktoo had been the first to see.

"Yes, it moves!" cried Nanook.

"What is it? What is it?" the hunters demanded. Their vision was piercing, but there was not one amongst them who had the keenness of Nanook's sight, and it was the chief who first explained the mystery.

"It is a walrus!" shouted Nanook, and instantly, with joyous cries of "Yes! Let us go and get it!" they

hurried off, followed by a crowd of boys of which Tooktoo was the excited head.

The boulder had indeed turned into a solitary walrus. Driven away from the main herd, he had wandered and found a feeding-ground of whelks and other food at the place where he had been observed. He had wallowed in his good fortune, feeding heartily on the whelks, digging them up with his tusks and crushing them with his strong flat grinders. Finishing his meal and feeling content with the world, the walrus was possessed with the sole desire to sleep and prepare himself for another banquet. Why, he reasoned, leave a good ground which he had so providentially discovered, when perhaps his brethren were on short commons elsewhere? He had come up at what he thought was the floe-edge. This was good, very good, for he could haul himself up and doze, and afterwards, at a moment's notice, dive into the water and again be safe. The walrus came up and dozed, but unfortunately for him the edge was only the edge of a wide crack which had opened with the tide and was closing up again.

The walrus dozed on, his hide becoming coated with hoar frost until he looked like the piece of ice for which Tooktoo had mistaken him. In his beatific state he remained until awakened by a returning sense of hunger and an instinctive feeling that active and powerful enemies were at large seeking to encompass his destruction. Even the El Dorado of the walrus has its hidden perils.

Deadly swift in the water but fatally clumsy on land,

the walrus at the first sense of danger and feeling of hunger had begun to shuffle off and make towards the water and his feeding-ground, and it was this movement which proved the first step towards his doom.

Nanook headed the hunters as they went down the nearest passage to the ice. There was no need, however to hasten now, for the end of the victim was certain, since he could neither progress on the ice fast enough to escape nor fight with any hope of winning. While in the water he would have been a terrible opponent, now he was so little to be feared that almost at their leisure Nanook's band surrounded him and with a few well-directed thrusts of their spears killed him, to grunts of satisfaction from themselves and shouts of delight led by Tooktoo.

"Fetch the sleds," Nanook ordered, and the youthful gang rushed back to the village, and while they harnessed the dogs they told a glowing tale of the capture of the mass of flesh, sending a thrill of pleasure thoughout the community and drawing a crowd of women to the hilltop to witness the distant dismembering of the walrus. It was a huge carcass, and the cutting up was roughly done; but the task served its purpose, and the meat was taken to the village to be distributed in equal shares. The hide was the exclusive property of the men who had seen the walrus from the hill, and it was divided so that they could make lines and other things. The best portion of the meat went by custom to the one who had first seen the walrus. To Tooktoo's joy this portion fell to him. It was not

the meat that caused his satisfaction, but the knowledge that he had been honoured by recognition as a hunter.

"Yes," said Nanook, "this is a great day in your life."

"It is many days since we had so many loads of meat brought in," remarked Atseak. "I will get some more soapstone and make one of the finest lamps for Tooktoo that were ever known."

"And I will always think of you when I burn it," answered the boy.

"That is well said, Tooktoo, though you are young enough to make it likely for you to see the day come when the Eskimo will no longer burn lamps like these, but get their light from the wonderful things which they say the white-faced people use to give them light as clear and powerful as the moonshine itself."

"Sukkenuk has indeed pacified the spirits," said Nanook. "We have had much good fortune to-day, and I believe that we shall have more, because as I came home I saw some big footprints of a bear. He has been prowling around and is not far away now. We will hunt him."

"Take care," said Atseak warningly, "a bear is dangerous and quick when cornered. I know that well, for I have fought one and have been wounded. See." He showed some scars. "These were left to me after the fight. Take your best dogs with you, those that are used to bear-hunting and know what to expect and what to do."

"Yes," replied Nanook. "I have the two that have

been taught bear-hunting. They are leaders. I shall be careful. The bear is not far away, from the appearance of the tracks. It is still only noon, so we can follow him for several hours. But there is no time to lose. Come."

He was joined in his expedition by the best hunters of the village, and when the party left there was high hope in all, including the dogs, which tugged at their harness and made the sled skim over the ice, following the scent and the comparatively new tracks of the bear, a great animal which it was estimated had a length of ten feet.

The bear was a lonely derelict. He had fallen on hard times and was leading an isolated existence. His wife had left him in the late autumn and was now buried beneath some friendly snowdrift, where she would continue sleeping until her cubs were born in the spring. She had intimated to her partner that so far as she was concerned he was free, and he had gone off to fend for himself during such lean times as were coming. He might with luck pick up a living and provide enough for one; but he had no wish to saddle himself with the task of helping any other bear to make a living.

With no object in life except to keep body and soul together, the bear had wandered until his coat was stained with the grease of many meals and he looked unkempt and disreputable. But he was past caring about appearances, his sole thoughts being centred in getting food and hoping for the coming of the

spring. He had reached a stage when he did not trouble even to lick himself, and so at least preserve self-respect.

The bear had scouted along the floe-edge, but with poor success, for the seals were both scarce and wary. He had watched the hunters, Nanook amongst them, catch seals and have their meal on the ice, and when he had wandered hopefully that way, after the hunters had left, he had found that they had collected all the remains and left nothing. He had smelt the village, and in his desperation had gone as near to the settlement as he dared go. Once he had espied a heap of rocks which he knew were not lying in a natural manner, and so must cover something. Being in a ravine, and not on the top of a hill, he knew it was not a *nellonaikotak,* or pile of stones placed for the guidance of travellers. It might, however, be a native's grave, in which case he had no wish to disturb it, not being a desecrator of graves, as were the dogs and foxes.

It might be worth while to investigate; accordingly the bear made for the heap, hoping that it would prove to be a hunter's *cache.* When he reached it he found that each stone was as big and heavy as a man could lift and the mass was now cemented by the frost. But these things offered no difficulty to the bear. With his huge claws he ripped the stones from their resting-places and sent them flying behind him like pebbles. Then he rejoiced, for he had indeed found a *cache,* and his gaze dwelt on some frozen quarters of deer.

The bear had made a hasty meal and looked for more.

As a full-grown ten-footer he needed hearty refreshment, and his appetite having been whetted by his success at the *cache* he circled round the village, on his way to the seashore to look for seals to complete the satisfaction of the day. It was while making this indiscreet journey that he left the footprints which Nanook had carefully noted.

When Nanook sighted him the bear was shambling along at what was really a fast pace, and he kept well ahead of the dogs, which needed no urging to the goal which they knew ought to provide them with more than one noble meal. The bear made for some rough broken ice where he hoped to escape from the unwanted attention of the dogs, and where at the worst he could fight with the odds in his favour. Mile after mile was covered by the hunters and the hunted, and the dogs at last came up with the quarry just as he was entering the broken ice and making for the floe-edge, where he meant to swim for it if necessary.

Tooktoo was with the party, and to him Nanook said, "Be careful, my son, when we are near the bear. Keep well away and guard the dogs whilst I attend to the bear."

Nanook slipped the buttons of the two leaders, and, freed from their traces and the weight of the sled, they rushed ahead and speedily and fearlessly overtook the bear. The chief followed with the rest of the team and halted at a safe distance. Taking gun and spear, he cautiously approached.

Tooktoo looked on, fascinated and somewhat afraid,

for the bear was very big and looked terrible and fierce at such close quarters; and he had heard many tales of the ferocity and power of the creature when at bay.

The bear was now a formidable opponent. Realizing that his escape was cut off, he had turned to fight to the death, and was standing with his back to a large piece of ice, paws and claws outstretched. Man and dog knew well the peril of those enormous and powerful limbs and the hideous ripping that would follow if the huge and merciless claws once got to work. The dogs in particular understood what it meant to come within reach of a blow of the paw or a raking slash of the claw; and they advanced warily, knowing that success depended entirely on the swiftness of their attack.

The dogs circled round the bear, feinting constantly and seeking to throw him off his guard so that the assault could be delivered, and all the time they made hideous noises to add to his confusion and distract his attention; Nanook and the hunters meanwhile encouraging them, and Tooktoo adding to the din with his piping cries.

The old leader, wary from experience and inherited instinct, was holding his own gallantly and successfully. He was pitted definitely against the bear, and the bear knew it, and while he was too crafty to ignore the rest he knew that his greatest danger came from the leader. His companion had been less lucky, having received some severe scratches, while only by a swift swerve had he escaped death from a savage sweep of the bear's paw. The two dogs knew that their business

was to keep the bear occupied and not to close with him, and they did their work perfectly.

The bear had tried to break away, but the dogs had instantly threatened his flanks and rounded him up, so that now he stood with a murderous gleam in his eyes, determined that if he had to die at all he would do as much mischief as he could before departing from a world which had put such an unpleasant finish to his banquet.

Nanook knew full well the peril he was facing, and he approached cautiously, ready to shoot at the right instant, without hurting the dogs. Judging his distance, the chief took careful aim and fired; but he missed, for the bear had suddenly dropped on all-fours to reach the dogs.

Rapidly reloading, Nanook waited his chance again and pressed the trigger, and instantly knew that he had fallen upon one of the hunter's evil moments. The cartridge had missed fire and jammed.

Nanook was too good a hunter and too swift a thinker to waste a moment of the precious time that was now left for decisive action. He cast the gun down and grasped his spear the very instant that the bear charged. Heedless of the dogs, whose teeth would not do much damage at this stage through his thick fur, the bear hurled himself with ferocious growls upon Nanook, rearing up to his full height as he slashed savagely at the hunter.

Nanook, with spear ready, and crouching to give him greater freedom and agility, jumped aside the moment he would otherwise have received a dangerous or

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

"With spear ready"

fatal blow, and thenceforward, while the contest lasted, it was a case of the chief tiring out the bear. Time after time the bear rushed at Nanook, maddened by the frantic dogs and his own failures, and at last, throwing all caution aside, he charged upon the hunter, snarling and growling.

The last stage of the fight had come. Once more slipping aside with a quickness born of the knowledge that the merest trip meant death, Nanook thrust his spear with all his might at the huge target of the shaggy monster, and so true was his aim, so strong his practiced arm, the barbed head of the weapon transfixed the heart of the bear.

Nanook sprang back, withdrawing his spear as he did so. "Another thrust to make sure you are dead," he cried, and again the ruthless iron was driven home. "It is well," said the hunter. "I myself am called The Bear—and the victory might have been with you."

He called off the dogs, and signalling to Tooktoo to come up he reharnessed the team, as the other sleds were fast approaching.

Nanook began to skin the bear, for it was too much to be taken in by one sled. Parts of the carcass he kept, to be hung up on a pole outside his home for three days, to propitiate the Spirit of the Bears; then, loading each sled with as much meat as it could carry, and giving some to the dogs, they slowly returned to the village.

Arriving almost at the same time as Nanook was Illkaluk, bringing in two hares, so that there was rejoicing in every home of the Ivaleet.

Nanook was proud, but too proud to show it, yet he could not do more than murmur thanks when Sukkenuk, who had been invited to the feast, declared that the chief had that day done deeds which in future days would be spoken of in song and story.

CHAPTER XIV

GHOSTS

THERE are no afternoon tea-parties in the land of the Eskimos; but when the hunters are away the women meet in each other's houses and have the equivalent of the tea-cups and the scandal. If a hostess crowds her dwelling with visitors and the talk is loud and constant she feels as if she has captured and successfully exhibited some lion of the moment. There were many such affairs as these in Nanook's community, and afternoons and evenings which would otherwise have been dull and flat became notable occasions because of the women's talk and rounds of visits. There was an absence of ceremony which added to the charm of the occasions. A woman would be passing a house in which an at-home was in progress, and if a privileged person, like Seorak, she would enter and join the company. It might be that she was at the moment the subject of warm and unfavourable comment; if so embarrassment was saved by the simple and highly civilized device of changing the topic and making it appear that the new-comer was the one individual whose presence had been desired. But mostly the talks were such as all could share in freely, and very often they related to ghosts and the spirits which form so large a part of the lives of the natives of the Arctic.

One day Seorak, returning home, saw several women enter a neighbouring house, and on passing she heard the murmur of voices. She knew what this indicated, and bidding Okerlil take charge of things, she exercised her privilege of joining the party. Entering the neighbour's house, she took a seat by the doorway, where she could see and hear everything.

Seorak's entrance was scarcely noticed, for an animated discussion was taking place on the subject of a recent ghostly visitation to the village.

"What did you see and hear?" asked a young woman excitedly.

"Yes," said the women in chorus, "tell us."

The hostess, to whom the appeal was made, was gratified and began her story. She was a strongly-built, ruddy-cheeked woman of about thirty years of age, the wife of one of the principal men whose perseverance and good fortune had provided him with enough of the world's goods to give him an established position in the tribe. It was a favourable moment for a successful start. The hostess was sitting with her feet tucked under her by the side of the lamp. Seated on the sleeping-bench, and in a semi-circle, were the other women, from the young with their strong white teeth and ruddy cheeks to the very old, with their toothless gums, wrinkled faces and thin grey locks.

The company was dimly shown by the flame of the two lamps, and the steady drip, drip of water was heard as it trickled down the ice-clad walls of the *igloo,*

trickling more quickly as the temperature rose with the added warmth of so many human beings.

There was an eager, expectant look upon each face as the women bent forward so that they should miss nothing of the story.

"Listen," said the hostess confidently, knowing that she had her audience with her. "Listen, and then say what we should do. It was on the second night following that when Kakkersill was cured of his illness, an illness that was brought about by his communion with the dead. As we all know, our custom is that when one dies one is buried under the stones outside the village, and food is left to eat, and all things are left at the grave which the spirit needs for its journey to the far beyond. We invoke the spirit to depart to the Land of the Sun and to leave us in peace. We all know that, do we not?"

"We do," murmured the hearers.

"And we all know that to wish for them back, and to think continually about them and to long for them, is dangerous, for that keeps the spirit from its journey and makes it earth-bound. And by doing these forbidden things the spirit becomes a ghost and haunts the village, so that if it is ill-disposed it bringe calamity upon us."

"It is so. It is so," agreed the women, crowding closer as their excitement grew.

"Well," continued the hostess, "the spirit that Kakkersill caused to be earth-bound is still here, and is haunting this place!" She paused, so that she might enjoy

the thrill of horror that went round the *igloo* and made the listeners shudder. More than one pair of staring eyes looked quickly towards the entrance, as if expecting the ghost to enter and take its place in the company.

"But how do you know?" a voice demanded.

"I will explain how I know," the narrator went on. "It was on that second night that I was returning home from the other end of the village. I had been visiting and it was late. It was half-moon and there was not much light. And the lights were low in the houses, for the men were asleep. It was very quiet. As I went along I felt that something was watching me, and I saw a dog crouching, staring and snarling at something between two houses. Presently it whined with fear and ran away. I looked, and saw a shadow flit from house to house. It was as swift as the light that shoots across the sky.

"I was terrified and ran and shouted. I ran until I reached home, but I cannot tell how I entered. All I know is that I found myself inside and told my husband."

There was a tense pause before she added, "And it is all so strange that this should come to me, because we have charms over the doorway, as you can see—those that Sukkenuk gave us—but we saw that that was not enough. To make things surer I placed my husband's hunting-knife before the doorway, edge outwards, so that no spirit can pass. We lay and listened, and saw a shadow steal past the doorway, and knew at once that it was a spirit wandering round."

"And what then?" the hearers gasped.

"In the morning we went out and saw no footprints; but certain things were gone—a coil of line and some meat and blubber, just the things that are needed for a journey. What do you think of it?"

"It certainly is the spirit," they agreed, "telling us that it wants to go on its journey. To stand in its way is dangerous. Tell Sukkenuk, and let him break its bonds and drive it away before worse happens."

"Yes," said Seorak, "that will be the best plan. Leave it to me, and I will tell him."

They agreed, and considered that in such hands the danger was as good as passed.

The women had still an hour or two to spare before they would be required in their homes, and having had their interest aroused they were in no hurry to exchange the delights of gossip and story-telling for domesticities.

Pilkalooyak ("The Iceberg"), a young woman who had been one of the most intent of the listeners, now asked for enlightenment. "I know," she said, "that our men leave offerings to the spirits of the different places where they go; but where are the spirits, and what are they like? *You* should know, if anyone does," she added, addressing an old woman who had been nodding throughout the story, but not missing a word.

"Yes," said the dame. "The spirits of the deer country have been seen, but it is well not to look upon them, for that means death to the one who sees. When I was young I was with a party that had gone inland to hunt deer. It was summer-time, and the hills were

bare of snow and the valleys strewn with stones which had fallen from the hills after the thaw. We marched with our loads many days over the hills and across the valleys until we reached the deer country. The men put their gifts to the spirits of the land beneath the stones in various places. This was their promise to obey all the laws relating to deer hunting. I said the men, but not all of them, for there was one who was mean and grasping. More than that, he was a mocker and scoffed at the idea of giving to the spirits, so as to gain their help and protection. 'No,' he said, 'I will get deer by my own skill and by my own power.' Such is the way of talk of those who come to grief.

"Now that country was in the power of two spirits, Ookomak, who appeared to be like a very short man with a large round face, who kills animals by throwing stones at them; and Kokkoarlo, like a very tall man, who is the spirit of one of a dark race of giants who lived here before the Eskimo. Both are very dangerous if seen, so that no wise man wishes to look upon them.

"Our men hunted day after day and were successful; all except the mean, scoffing man, and he came back night after night with nothing. He saw plenty of deer, but could not get near them. Still he scoffed and jeered more than ever at the fortunate hunters who had placed their gifts in the ground.

"One evening, as we were waiting in camp for our men to return, I saw his wife staring across the valley. I looked too, but though my eyes were keen in those days I saw nothing. 'Look,' she said, 'I see two men

coming across the valley. They are strangers, not like our own men. One is very tall, a giant, and the other short, with a large round face and he is carrying a large stone. They are strangers from a strange tribe.'

"When I heard this and saw no one a great fear possessed me, for I knew that my companion and her husband were in danger. And I was right, for that very night as they lay asleep a stone crashed down from the hill above them and killed them both. Yes, the spirits are helpful to those who recognize them and obey them. To such they are faithful and remain unseen, but to the scoffers and unbelievers they show themselves, and how dangerous they are I have told you in the story of the fate of the mocking hunter and his wife, in those long past days when I was young, even as you are now."

The old woman finished by turning to the questioner, who crouched nearer to her neighbour, for it was suddenly borne in upon her that as once upon a time, long ago, the old woman had been like her, so would she, in years to come, be like the toothless wreck whose tale had just been told.

The party had so comfortably settled to the joys of telling and listening to stories that there was something of a competition to relate fresh tales. Many voices were heard, but above them all rose that of Nootaitok, another old woman, who was determined not to be outdone by any rival.

"Yes," she chimed in, "but there are bad as well as good spirits inland. Have you heard of the demon vampire? No? Well, I will tell you. The custom of

our people, as we all know, is to live near the sea, and they spend much of their time on the sea itself. They only go inland at times to hunt, and then we should be careful not to offend the spirits of the places that are visited. But we do not always escape evil and danger, and that was the case when I was a girl.

"A party of two or three travellers had gone several days' travel inland, and all went well until first one and then another member of the party disappeared. This happened during the night. In the morning a track was seen on the ground, as though a heavy body had been dragged along; but beyond that nothing was to be seen, and no one could offer any explanation of the mystery. All sorts of explanations were offered, but there was none which satisfied the wise old hunters and those who were best able to understand strange things. I was only a young girl, so I could do no more than be frightened and wait till I could learn what this strange and terrifying thing meant.

"A watch was kept on everything and by everybody in different ways. The headmen used all their wisdom and powers and experience to find out what was happening, and every ordinary thing was examined, and care was taken that no unnecessary risks should be run. For a long time, as it seemed, though it was not really long, there was nothing of any sort to enlighten us; then one night the watchers saw a strange and terrifying spectacle—a large animal like a huge wolf, but with head and forepaws like an Eskimo. This dreadful

creature was all the more terrible because it was carrying an enormous ax.

"Now we all know how brave the Eskimo is in fighting ordinary animals. Nanook does not fear even the bear or the walrus, and there are many who are ready to follow wherever he cares to lead. But there are times when no courage of man, however great, can make him victorious over a foe. Such a time had come now, and the bravest of the hunters could only look spellbound on a monster such as they had never seen before, and one did not know how to set about to fight. The light was dim, too, so that they could hardly make out the form of the creature that was slipping stealthily along between the rocks towards a solitary tent where only one hunter lived.

"They tried to shout to warn him, but somehow did not make any noise, just as we sometimes try to cry for help in our bad dreams, and know that our mouths do not make a sound. I knew those awful hours well when I was younger than some of you who are listening now; but I am too old and too near the Land of the Setting Sun to be troubled by such dreams as those.

"The awful monster was dimly seen getting nearer and nearer the lonely tent, and presently it went inside like a flash. It was Oolemaukarluk, the vampire.

"There was a cry of terror, for the lonely hunter must have awakened and seen the death that was overshadowing him. Perhaps he tried to escape, perhaps even to rush to get his spear, to drive it into the creature

that had come to him through the gloom of the rocks. We do not know, and no man can ever tell; but almost instantly, as it seemed, the animal reappeared, dragging the hunter on the ground, so that he could take the victim to his lair.

"It was now that the spell of terror and fear in the hunters was broken. They saw that one of their tribe was actually being stolen in this murderous fashion, and with loud courageous cries, brandishing their spears, they rushed in a body towards the monster, determined at all costs to try to kill him and to rescue their comrade, dead or alive.

"But what can man do against the spirits? What did the hunters find now? What new difficulty rose up against them? Your silence tells me that not one of you knows. And no wonder, for as the hunters dashed up in their grief and rage they found that the vampire spirit had separated himself from them by causing a river to rise and run between him and them. Yes, when they believed that they would be upon him, piercing him with their spears, a river which they could not swim was roaring between them and the monster and his victim. Here again was a happening which froze their courage and made their arms as weak as babies', so that they could not even throw their spears, and while they were impotent like this on one side of the river the vampire was hurrying away on the other with his victim, mocking them and scornfully asking why they did not follow him.

"Ah! That was one of the deadly evil spirits of the

days when I was young. He took the hunter, there is no doubt, to his lair and ate him—and it might have been me or any other person in the camp.

"After such a terrible visitation we could no longer stay in those parts, and the camp was struck and we returned home, travelling all night, and sleeping in the daytime for a little while, and then only when a watch was kept, for the vampire only attacked in the gloom and darkness and might be following the flying tribe.

"At last the party reached home and told their tale, hoping that others would go and try and find the vampire and destroy him; but no one would go, and from that time there has never been another visit to the country that I saw when I was young."

"And no wonder!" declared the hostess. "Neither should we go to it, nor let our menfolk."

Seorak had been listening intently, and it was felt that she too would have a tale to tell that was worthy of being put side by side with that of the vampire. She had been gazing fixedly, as if she saw beyond the walls, and the attention of the audience had been gradually concentrated upon her during the pause that followed the last narration.

"You have truly said that there are bad as well as good spirits," she said, turning to Nootaitok, who was her contemporary; "but the good are the most powerful. It is useless to shake your head. What I say is true, or there could not be any Eskimo left. Now I will tell you all of a seal-hunter that was saved from a sea-demon by a good spirit."

"Ah! That is a tale worth hearing!" her hearers cried, relieved.

"It is about *Tootegar,* the Spirit of Light. In my young days I knew of a man who was a very clever seal-hunter, and a clever *kyaker* too. He did not fear the roughest weather, and when the other men refused to go on the sea he would get into his *kyak* and paddle out over the stormy waters like a gull. His *kyak* never turned over, and he often brought in seals when it seemed impossible to catch them. He was well liked by all the tribe because of his good temper and generosity.

"One day the hunter was out in his *kyak* as usual, looking for seals, when suddenly he saw what looked like a flat rock just above water, and a seal lying upon it. He paddled up quietly, then with a swift throw of his spear he struck it. He expected to see it dive, but to his amazement the rock itself sank, and in its place appeared the head of a man, naked, as the hunter could see, in the water, with the exception of large boots.

"The hunter instantly understood—it was Kummikjuak, the sea-demon, who appeared like a rock, and baited himself with a seal to draw hunters within his reach. The hunter was paralysed with fright as he felt his *kyak* being clutched by enormous hands and drawn down. He gave himself up as lost, for who can fight against a spirit, especially an evil one? He looked despairingly round, to see if any other *kyak* was within sight and able to help him. There was no sign

of any other craft; but instead the hunter saw something which took all fear from his bones and body.

"In the distance was an island which he had never noticed before, and upon it was a small stone *igloo*. As he gazed he saw a small woman, like an Eskimo, leave the house and walk towards him on the sea. She had very bright eyes, and her heart could be seen glowing and flashing like fire in front of her. She drew near and passed him, and as she went she beckoned him and he felt his strength return and his dread of the demon pass away, so that he was able to paddle towards the shore. He soon reached land, and on looking back he found that all had disappeared—demon, rock, spirits, land, and Tootegar, the good spirit, herself. The sea was just as it had been before, and the hunter knew that he had been saved by Tootegar, the Spirit of Light. So you see, it is always pleasing to the spirits when one is good and kind and generous to one's neighbours and does something to make the life of the village better and happier."

"Ah! That was worth hearing," the audience commented, with sighs of relief and approval, while the hostess smiled with satisfaction as she realized how successful her party had been. To crown its success there was no excuse for awkwardness in breaking up, for the women unceremoniously hastened from the house upon hearing the shrill cries of the children, who had heard the hunters and were shouting, "The sleds! The sleds! They are coming!"

The women hurried home to welcome their husbands, and Seorak joined Okerlil, to tell her of the afternoon's events before sending her to bring back the gifts of meat and blubber from the successful men, while she made plans to turn the news of the party to her own advantage.

CHAPTER XV

THE LOST TRIBE

SPRING was coming and the gladness of the season was felt in the homes of the Ivaleet, especially when there were discussions as to what should be done in the longer and brighter days.

One afternoon Nanook's *igloo* was crowded with the headmen and their wives, amongst them being Sukkenuk and Obloreak. The subject was one that had been often mentioned since the visit of the Argvungmeoot people. It was that a small tribe had been met, a tribe that was on journey and had come from a long distance.

"Who heard about them last, and who are they?" asked Nanook.

"I heard most about them," said Sukkenuk. "They were hunting this way across the country, and may perhaps settle down when they reach the other coast. They are strangers to this part, and it is said that the style of their dress and their speech are different. But they are Eskimo, and seem friendly enough. All this I heard from the chief. He told me many things." Sukkenuk looked solemnly at his companions, by way of emphasizing the importance of his private information.

"Where are they now?" inquired Nanook. "I spoke with the chief, but there were many matters that put this tribe out of my mind. It is a good thing that we have Sukkenuk to glean these tidings for us. He misses nothing."

"When last heard of they were not far away," answered Sukkenuk. "They should be camping at Noovoiya, and from there, when the days get longer, or even before, they will take the short route across the hills to the tribes on the West Coast."

"Are they camping at Noovoiya?" asked Atseak. "Then they should bring plenty of meat with them, for they will not get much there, nor will they stay too long. I spent some time at Noovoiya when I was a young man. It is two days' hard journey from here, and is not a good place for hunting. The cliffs are high and steep and the tides are swift in many places, making the ice unsafe and bad feeding-grounds for seals. And the winds sweep like hurricanes down the valleys and passes. There is only one place there, at the point called Noovoiya, where sometimes a seal can be got at the turn of the tide. It is a whirlpool, and very dangerous even to those who know the place well. Yes, it is a bad, gloomy place, such as might well be the abode of evil spirits." The old hunter shook his head slowly and shuddered as he added, "No, they will surely not make a long stay there."

The cheerfulness of the company was temporarily damped, and there was silence as each man pictured the inhospitable place and its dangers, then the cloud

vanished as the voice of Nanook rose again heartening his people.

"Yet it would be well if someone went to visit these strangers," he said, "and find out who they are and how they have fared. If they are going on they will be glad to know the best routes. They may be part of the Kinnepetoo tribe that we have heard of; if so, they have come from a long distance indeed."

Again there was silence, for no one was anxious to volunteer, nor did the women encourage their menfolk to express a readiness to go.

"I will go," Nanook announced quietly. "My team is in good order and I have plenty of stores. And I can afford the time."

There were sighs of relief and murmurs of admiration, though Annorak looked anxiously at her husband and drew Tooktoo towards her.

"Atseak can tell me everything about the route," Nanook added, "so I shall save time, and I shall be back in a week. But I shall want someone to go with me. It is not the sort of journey that any man can make alone."

There was renewed silence. Tooktoo had been listening hard, and his imagination had been fired by the talk of a new tribe, a whirlpool and the abode of evil spirits. He wished the spirits were far away, but the thought of meeting them did not prevent him from pulling away his mother's hand from his mouth and exclaiming, "Let, *me* go! I can help to drive and can take care of the dogs."

"Nay," protested Annorak, "not both."

"If your mother will spare you I will bring you back," said Nanook. "But I shall want a man as well."

The young men had been whispering together, but only the voice of Kakka was heard. "I will go," he said. "I have no one depending upon me. And I know how to hunt. There is my rifle, too. Let Tooktoo come with us, and I will see to it with Nanook that he comes safely back."

Annorak sighed resignedly, yet she was proud as she gave permission for her boy to go with his father, and somewhat scornful of the young men who now, in confusion, made various excuses to depart.

Nanook was pleased, for Kakka would have been the hunter of his choice. "Let us sleep now," he said, "and the day after to-morrow we will start early. The moon is favourable and we shall travel long distances."

When the party had broken up Tooktoo besieged his grandfather with questions about the place they were to visit and the tribe they expected to see. He was determined to take with him the spear that the old hunter had made for him and the knife he had received as a present from Omingmuk, and making these preparations he felt that at last he was very much of a man. For the rest of the day Atseak did most of the talking, but he was careful in Annorak's hearing to say little of the dangers of the whirlpool and the evil spirits who might be about in its gloomy neighbourhood.

The following day was spent in preparation. The sled was overhauled and made ready, the dogs were fed

and rested, and fed again at night, a change of dry stockings and boots for each traveller was packed in a bag, and articles were packed for barter with the strangers, if they were met.

Kakka knew as he made his preparations that he had risen in importance in the community, and he felt superior to the young men, who now that they were no longer wanted feigned eagerness to join the party. "I will give you all the news when I return," he promised them loftily, and they were glad to get beyond reach of his scornful condescension.

As Kakka packed the last of his things in the evening a visitor entered his *igloo,* and on looking up he saw that it was Okerlil.

The orphan had in her hand a small bag such as hunters used for their ammunition. "Here," she said, handing it towards him, "Seorak has heard of your journey, and has sent this to hold your ammunition. There are charms inside which will protect you from danger."

Having spoken rapidly and seen that Kakka held the bag firmly in his hand Okerlil fled before he could collect himself to stammer thanks.

Kakka looked at the bag with growing pleasure. It was quite a work of art, with designs worked in different colours, showing skill in the worker and patience in the sewing. The bag had a long strap, and as Kakka slung it over his shoulder as a trial test he felt that this addition to his equipment would give him added importance when they met the strangers. But on examina-

tion of the bag he smiled and told himself that if the gift itself was from Seorak the work was that of Okerlil. In the dim light of the *igloo* he had not seen the girl's face clearly, but enough to show that she was confused and anxious, and this raised a continuation of thought from which Kakka had not been free since the day when Okerlil had done so much to help him escape from danger. "How clever she is with her needle," thought Kakka. "Certainly as clever as Nappotsee, and she is even better looking. And in all the houses they speak well of her because of her industry and good temper. Yes, it is well that Nappotsee has gone to live with other people."

Nanook's sled was quite large enough for the three with their outfits, and as Kakka added his dogs to the chief's team a quick journey was assured, to the great comfort of Annorak, who finally charged Tooktoo to be careful, and drew a powerful picture of what would happen if for any reason Nanook and Kakka returned without him.

"They will come back safely," Atseak assured her, and Sukkenuk and Seorak having added their conviction that all would be well the sled made an early start and was soon out of sight.

When Kakka looked back he saw a lonely figure, that of a woman.

"We shall come back to our own people," said Nanook cheerfully, "and you will not be wanting in a welcome. It is a fine bag that Seorak made for you."

"With Okerlil's borrowed fingers," laughed Tooktoo.

"Well, there she is, waving you farewell—just as it might be Nappotsee." He gave a shout and flourish of his whip, for to him had been given the honour of a spell at driving, and he was very anxious to show them how to do it.

At noon, when a considerable distance had been covered, a halt was made to give the dogs a rest and for a hasty meal of frozen meat and tepid water. The journey now became more difficult and slower, and Nanook, Kakka and Tooktoo took turns to run by the side of the sled as they coasted along, keeping close to land, and passing across the bays from point to point.

Towards evening they chose a sheltered spot round one of the points and prepared to camp for the night. Directing Tooktoo to watch the dogs and prevent them from running away, the two men built a small snow house, large enough for the three and their belongings. When this was done they gave the dogs a good feed of chopped-up seal meat, which would keep them warm and prevent any desire to run away, and selected a suitable boulder of ice. Through this they made a hole with the butts of their spears; then slipping all the dogs' lines from the loop of the sled they passed them through the hole and securely fastened them. In this way the dogs were safely anchored for the night and a quick departture in the morning ensured. The dogs, well fed and feeling comfortable, scratched holes in the snow, then curled themselves up, and made the most of their sleeping-time.

All outside duties being finished, Nanook called

Tooktoo, and entering their sleeping-chamber, they soon made ready for rest. This was a simple task. Tooktoo, like a good scout of the Arctic, acted joyfully as assistant to Kakka, who had appointed himself cook.

Kakka went about his business with dispatch, not unmindful of Okerlil, and rather wishful that she might be there to see and admire his dexterity. He drove four pegs into the snow, and fixing the small lamp upon them, filled it with prepared blubber. Then he pushed his spear horizontally into the side of the hut and used it as a peg upon which to hang the cooking-pot.

Kakka had brought some blocks of snow in with him, and telling Tooktoo to fill the pot with snow from them and melt it for drinking water, he busied himself with arranging the articles belonging to them in as small a space as possible.

Nanook, as leader and provider, had meanwhile been chopping slices of meat from a deer-ham and cutlets from seal's ribs; and by the time Tooktoo had the water ready a substantial meal was available. It was rapidly and unceremoniously eaten, and then there was the blessed prospect of perfect sleep.

Tooktoo, being little and adaptable, was able to roll himself in his sleeping-blanket and lie down, to fall to sleep at once; but with Nanook and Kakka the case was different. The sleeping-house had been hastily built, merely to give a few hours' shelter from the piercing cold. It was too small to allow them to lie at full length, and accordingly they had to sit upon the floor, with their backs against the icy wall. Rolling their

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

Thawing frozen fingers

legs in their sleeping-blankets, they pulled their hoods over their faces, tucked their hands into the sleeves of their deerskin coats, and slept, hunter-like whilst on journey, hearing every unusual sound even when sleeping, and ready instantly to spring up and deal with any emergency.

Time seemed to have no length or body in it when Nanook called upon Tooktoo to rise. Hours had passed, yet when the grumbling and protesting boy rubbed his eyes he felt that he had not slept at all. The temperature had fallen and the feeling of the bitter dawn was in the shelter, so that when he heard the words, "Tooktoo, Tooktoo, get up and have breakfast. We shall be starting soon!" the glamour of the expedition had evaporated.

Still in a heavy, dreamy state Tooktoo rose and found that Kakka had already melted water, and that more meat had been sliced off. He fell silently to work and his heaviness disappeared.

"How is the weather?" asked Nanook.

Kakka pierced a hole in the wall and peeped through.

"There is a clear sky, and the weather is good," he reported.

"Then we should reach the village to-night," said the chief. "Have you finished eating, Tooktoo?"

There was a growl of acquiescence.

"Very well, we will load and start."

Nanook broke open the doorway and Tooktoo shivered with the cold that was admitted. He shivered still more when he was out in the dull morning and sleepily

watched the getting ready of the team and sled. Then the boy became fully awake as he began to swing the whip backward and forward over the dogs to keep them in order.

Dawn was just breaking as they started. A raven perched upon a neighbouring crag croaked a farewell blessing or malediction, according to the fancy of the hearer, for not leaving more behind to be eaten; and a white fox barked at the party from the shore ice, then, grinning as if in derision, it turned and scurried up the hill.

The day proved bright and inspiriting and the ice was in good condition, having been sheltered from the worst of the early storms and not broken up.

Nanook, following the directions which Atseak had given, left the main ice and took a shorter route between the islands fringing the mainland. This was a new route, through steep and gloomy cliffs, and Nanook kept the dogs at full stretch, occasionally changing places with Kakka to give whip-arm and voice a rest, and to point out the different guiding features to Tooktoo, so that he might add to his knowledge and further his education as a traveller. Neither Nanook nor Kakka had been that way before, but to them, as to Tooktoo, whatever was seen was photographed on the mind and would be so clearly remembered that even after many years they would be able to make a sketch of the whole route. This long usage of the faculties, generation after generation, had enabled Atseak to recall the features and difficulties of the country and make

it possible for Nanook to continue and say confidently, when at midday a halt was made and notes compared with Kakka, "We shall be there to-night, if all goes well, and able to sleep in comfort. We will stop one day to exchange news and to trade, and then we will return. It would never do to keep you away too long from your mother, Tooktoo."

"And there is Okerlil," said the boy, with a sly look at Kakka, who pretended not to hear, though he was thinking of the orphan and how well her gift which he acknowledged as hers, would suit him when they met the strangers.

The islands were now left and a more open route was taken, and the journey continued until they were near a headland which had been seen from a great distance.

"Look," said Nanook, "that is Noovoiya. We shall soon see the tribe or know what has happened to them."

The headland rose steep and high above other hills and cliffs, looking as though the top had been cut off and another hill planted on the levelled summit. When first seen the headland looked very near, but there had been many hours' travel before it was reached in the evening.

The three had kept a good look-out for signs of a village or sled track to guide them to the strangers' camp.

Kakka's hawk-like eyes were the first to make him cry, *"Taika, taika*—look, look!" He pointed to a distant spot ahead, on the main ice. "There are the houses, I think."

"Yes," Nanook agreed, looking intently. For a few moments they journeyed in silence, then Nanook added, "But there seems no life there. However, we will soon see."

The chief shouted to the dogs and the whip cracked, and soon the sled was at the end of the journey.

Both men were right—it was a village that they saw, but deserted and lifeless.

"They have gone, and are not returning," said Nanook. "See, all the houses are broken and everything is desolate."

Tooktoo had already begun to roam about and inspect, and Nanook and Kakka, wasting no time in regrets, went from dwelling to dwelling and built up a story from the dismal signs they saw.

The three were in the open air again when Nanook said, "They have stayed here a long time and have been hungry. Look—the insides of the houses are black with smoke and there are no bones or scraps anywhere. We will stay here to-night and look around for further signs to-morrow morning. But we shall find that they are not in the neighbourhood. I think they have travelled on, and we may not see them. We should have to make a fresh journey for that—and then there might be more success for us."

An examination of the houses was made, in which Tooktoo showed an adventurous interest, and the best having been chosen it was put in order for a temporary abode. They camped as they had done the night before, but in greater comfort, as the dwelling was a permanent

one and had a sleeping-bench. Some dried heather had been left upon the bench, and Tooktoo turned this about and rearranged it for a bed, while the travellers added to their comfort by drying their boots and stockings. Their meal was the same as before, sparing them all trouble as to what they should eat and drink, and after a profound sleep Nanook directed a thorough search of the camp, in the hope that they would learn something definite of the strangers.

Tooktoo was the first to make a significant discovery. Stuck firmly in the top of one of the houses he found a piece of stick pointing to a route between the hills, and there were marks scratched on the hard snow beneath the stick.

Nanook carefully studied these signs. "Yes," he said, "they have gone, and that is the route through the hills that Atseak told of. It is a fiord and goes a long way into the hills. It is the route generally used by those who cross to the other coast. We will thoroughly examine the place before returning home, and it may be that that is all we can do."

Leaving Tooktoo to mind the dogs and sled Nanook and Kakka climbed the nearest hill, from the top of which they could get a good view of the surrounding country and of the fiord.

Kakka noticed something unusual at the foot of the rocks in a small bay in the distance. It was too far off to be distinguishable, but he was so sure that he had seen an uncommon object that he called the attention of the chief to it.

"We will go and see," said Nanook, and he signalled to Tooktoo to bring up the dogs and sled.

The sled was driven up the fiord, then, as the spot which Kakka had noticed was approached the dogs showed unwillingness to proceed.

"Do not urge them," Nanook ordered, "sometimes they see things that are hidden from us. Stay here, Tooktoo, with the dogs, and wait till we come back. It is not far for us to go, and we shall not be long."

"I know what we shall find," said Kakka, in a low voice as he and Nanook hurried on foot, while Tooktoo anxiously watched them.

"Yes, we can already tell," answered Nanook.

No more was said until they stopped and saw before them the signs of an Arctic tragedy. It was summed up by Nanook, who said, "A party has camped here, a party that had reached starvation point and was unable to move."

"They were ill as well as starving," added Kakka.

"Yes, and too ill to defend themselves, so their dogs turned upon them. Look at the marks. It is an ill thing for us when we cannot defend ourselves even from our own dogs. And the battle did not end with that. Look at these other marks. They show that the dogs themselves were attacked by wolves. That means that the male dogs have been killed and that the females have joined the wolf pack and will become as fierce as any of the wolves themselves."

Nanook and Kakka picked up some fragments of

clothing and some implements and examined them closely.

"They were strangers, and not our people," said Nanook. "We can do nothing here."

"No, let us get away," answered Kakka. They spoke in low tones, for accustomed though they were to tragedies, there was something uncommonly mournful in this disaster in a gloomy and unknown region; and while neither of the men put his thoughts into utterance there was a sudden desire to leave the neighbourhood and make a fast journey home.

Nanook longed to feel that the boy was in safe keeping, for he was suddenly oppressed with a foreboding of evil.

Kakka's quick eye and ear had detected the change in the chief, but he made no remark, and when they rejoined Tooktoo and were hurriedly getting ready to start back he made a special effort to support Nanook in a show of indifference to any unseen peril and to take the tragedy as one of the inevitable happenings of life in a tribe which had not the advantages of the Ivaleet.

The sled was rapidly drawn away, and as the lonely landmark was left behind and it was known that every yard covered was a yard nearer home Nanook's cheerfulness returned, and remembering that seals might be found he ordered a halt, so that a few might be got to feed the dogs.

The halting-place was at the spot of which Atseak had spoken particularly, and remembering the old hunter's

direction Nanook located it without difficulty. On reaching the place he found that Atseak had not overrated its dangers and terrors. It was a steep point going straight down into the water, and the tides surged furiously around it. Near the point was open water caused by the overwhelming rush of the high tides, and the surrounding ice for a little distance was thin and treacherous. At the change of tides a seal would come from under the ice, and, putting up its head, would be swept across the hole and under the ice on the other side.

It was a lonely, gloomy, treacherous place; but Nanook was used to such adventures as that on which they were now embarking in the interests of the dogs and themselves, and once more bidding Tooktoo see to the animals and the sled, the two hunters made ready, loading their rifles, fixing the heads on their spears and uncoiling their lines.

"Keep on the sound ice," said Nanook finally to Tooktoo, as he himself ventured cautiously on the thin ice, closely followed by Kakka, ready to give and take help in their precarious positions.

Tooktoo, from his safe, sound ice, watched spellbound and in growing fear, dreading to think of what might happen to himself if these adventurous men were lost. They were indeed in the hands of the good spirits; he himself could do nothing but trust in those unseen powers. In his absorbed observation he almost forgot to watch the dogs and keep them quiet, for never had he seen such a display of courage and activity as he

witnessed now in watching these two hunters playing with an awful death. Both Nanook and Kakka knew that once they were in that icy whirlpool nothing short of a miracle could save them; and neither expected a miracle to be worked for his special benefit.

Sliding on one foot at a time forward, Nanook carefully tested the strength of the ice and judged its bearing capacity exactly, and Kakka as accurately calculated the point between safety and destruction. The ice was just thick enough to bear, and venturing as near the edge as possible, Nanook waited with gun and spear ready. Presently a seal shot up on the side opposite to him and was swept by the resistless tide towards the immovable hunter. Nanook took his aim and fired his shot, then, as the dead seal floated nearer he pierced it, javelin-wise, and the barbed head holding firmly he slid carefully back, drawing his catch through the thin ice and landing it on the stronger surface, where the relieved Tooktoo helped to haul it on to the sled.

Again the hunters tried, this time Kakka firing from the strong ice and killing a seal, whilst Nanook fearlessly ventured again upon the dangerous ice to spear the animal and drag it in. By these means, working together, the two men caught half-a-dozen seals, and with that catch they resumed their homeward journey.

Nanook knew that at this stage it would be madness to give the dogs a feed, as that would make them sluggish on the journey; therefore he drove steadily to the

first sleeping-place, travelling quickly and hopefully, for the route was familiar again, and the dogs knew that they were going home and pulled well. Without stopping for a midday halt they reached their sleeping-house late at night.

Kakka, before leaving this shelter, had closed up the entrance and now all was ready for use, after anchoring the dogs to the friendly ice-boulder. With the good luck of the hunting it was possible to cut up and give to the dogs two of the seals, and thus generously fed they curled up and gathered strength in their sleep for any sudden call that might be made upon them. The men had cause to be glad and to feel that their strange journey had not been vainly undertaken, for in addition to the seals they had much interesting information to take home with them.

They rose early and started before dawn filtered through the darkness. Tooktoo was in high spirits, and did not notice glances that passed between Nanook and Kakka, though he saw that the dogs were becoming strangely excited and did not need his shouts or the cracks of his whip to urge them on. The boy was surprised when his father quietly took charge of the sled and said as he did so, addressing Kakka, "Do you see them?"

"I have seen them for some time. They are following us."

"What!" shouted Tooktoo, turning his head. "Yes—wolves!"

"Keep hold of the sled, Tooktoo," said Nanook

steadily. "Let me and Kakka shelter you."

"I am not afraid," replied Tooktoo proudly.

"We know that, but we are men and you are but a child and must be shielded. These wolves belong to the pack that caused what we have seen at the headland. They are cunning and know that we are only one sled instead of many, and that there are only two men—with a boy, of course, to help. They will follow us and then try to rush at the right moment."

"Perhaps they will not come too far or for too long," hazarded Kakka, and it seemed as if his hope might be realized, for as the sled was dragged along and the country changed the pack was lost to view.

"We will make a very short halt," said Nanook at midday. The meal was just finished and the journey had been resumed, when, without warning the wolves reappeared and charged the sled, at which the dogs were straining frantically.

Nanook and Kakka were ready with their rifles instantly, and as two cracks were heard together two wolves rolled over, shot, and were fallen upon and devoured.

"Let us hurry," shouted Nanook, "before they come again."

Only a few wolves were left, but they were lean and ravenous, and very dangerous if they reached the dogs.

"Kakka, watch the sides and Tooktoo the back. I will attend to the front."

The allotted posts were taken, and though the back was really the place of safety Tooktoo with his spear

was ready for any wolf that might come within his reach.

Kakka, with gun ready for instant action, watched keenly as the race for life progressed.

Soon the famished wolves were up again, keeping at a distance as with easy strides they ran alongside and ahead of the dogs, ready to attack the moment they saw a chance.

Nanook, shouting to the team, to hearten rather than to urge them, kept the long lash of his whip curling and swishing backward and forward over the dogs, not once touching them, but as if protecting them. And they knew it and raced steadily on, knowing also that in that terrible weapon was a wonderful protection.

A long, gaunt wolf, maddened by hunger, dashed at the leader.

Nanook, noting the rush, and judging the distance and his time, twisted his wrist. There was a sound like a pistol shot and a howl of pain and astonishment, for the wolf had been struck full and true by the lash and had rolled over. He was put out of action, and as he writhed in his helplessness his companions fell mercilessly upon him. Again there was a respite as the fallen wolf was torn to pieces.

Kakka made a flying shot at a bunch of wolves as they came up again, and another wolf went down; so throughout the afternoon the chase continued.

Twice did Nanook stop a savage rush with his whip, and once more Kakka fired and killed.

The point of land which sheltered the Ivaleet village

came in view. "We shall get home now," declared Nanook, but not for an instant was their vigilance relaxed, nor did his terrible whip cease its crippling and destructive work.

By this time the wary wolves, still running alongside, kept out of range of the lash, but Kakka's gun was ready to bring down another slinking form in case of a last rush by the pack.

"That is a joyful sound," shouted Nanook, as they heard the howls of dogs.

"They are roving on the hills and see us," screamed Tooktoo, brandishing his spear, but careful to grip the sled.

The home dogs had taken in the situation and were racing to join the panting, straining team as reinforcements. But the wolves had already smelt the village, and they had no liking in their exhausted state to do battle with the growling, bristling, powerful brutes that were hurrying towards them; and as soon as the home dogs charged round the point they turned and retreated, followed for some distance by the confident fresh dogs from the village.

When the wolves had vanished the dogs returned home to fraternise with their weary companions.

Nanook's voice was gone and his right arm was numb as he listened to the shouts of welcome; Tooktoo, surrounded by admiring and envious boys, would have met all the spirits of the land to have such adulation, and Kakka, meeting Okerlil, felt that all the perils had been worth encountering.

Okerlil explained that by chance she was on her way to visit a neighbour. "I hear that you have come through many dangers," she said. "So the charms which Seorak sent protected you. She will be glad when I tell her."

"Yes," said Kakka, "and tell her that *your* gift also helped me greatly. She will be pleased to hear that too. I would have brought you a return gift if there had been anyone to trade with. But I shall not forget. I have seen enough this journey to remember it as long as I live."

Kakka passed on to his home, and Okerlil, with a happy smile and heightened colour, forgot to call upon the neighbour, but hastened back to Seorak, to give her such a message as she considered appropriate to the circumstances.

CHAPTER XVI

THE POLAR THIEF

"ANOTHER puppy is missing," said Nanook to Terraginear.

"Ah, those wolves!" replied Terraginear.

"Yes, and that wolf tried to break into the white man's house."

Terraginear affected not to hear.

"Some day," Nanook continued significantly, "a gun will show what sort of wolf the thief is. And this is sure, that if it is found, as it will be, that the thief is not a wolf at all, he and his will be banished and will have to cast in his lot with another tribe that does not want him."

Terraginear hung his head and mumbled some words which the chief imperfectly heard.

"Sukkenuk has found out who the spirit was that was spoken of as being earth-bound and was seen searching in the village. The women that day had plenty to talk about, but not as much as they will have unless your ways are mended. I will say no more at present." Nanook walked away and Terraginear went shamefacedly home, to seek such comfort as his wife, knowing what she did, could give him.

Terraginear had reverted to his wrong-doing, for he was inherently a thief, and exulted more in stealthily

and successfully raiding larders than in coming back laden from the chase. In that little community, where everything was shared and no one was allowed to go short, there was no need or excuse for stealing, but he was a robber from sheer love of the disreputable game. When the luck of hunting was against him he and his wife were kept provided with meat and oil, though not without some grumbles and pointed remarks upon his decreasing skill.

Hints had been given which showed Terraginear quite plainly that he was under suspicion, and he had fenced and excused himself, while not admitting his guilt. He blamed everything upon hostile spirits, taking the supposititious case of an honest, well-meaning man who, seeing another man's abundant possessions, had his hands uncontrollably directed to the goods and as resistlessly prompted to annex, and the attempted raid upon the factor's store was the culminating crime.

"Nanook has been talking to me seriously," he told his wife on leaving the chief. "I must be more careful than ever."

"Cannot you go hunting honestly?" asked his wife.

"I will very soon," vowed Terraginear. "I would have started now, but the young men are back from the deer hunting and they have brought much desirable meat."

"We shall get some as a present," she assured him.

"Yes," he answered cunningly, "but not as much as I can take with my hook. Just this one time more, then I will show them that I am as good a hunter as ever

I was. The spring is with us again and the world is waking from its long sleep, so that my dark days too will soon be past."

A hunting party of the young men had been formed, and taking Tooktoo with them, they had gone on journey and had been absent for some days. Now they were back, and the deer-meat was providing a feast to begin with and lesser meals to follow.

"I have seen Terraginear and spoken with him," said Nanook to Sukkenuk. "I was serious and warned him, and he now knows what his punishment may be."

"It may need more than words to make him honest again," said the chief conjurer grimly. "We shall see."

"He has spoken of wolves and dogs as thieves," continued Nanook, "but by this time he should know that even the children could tell him the truth. Yet it is strange that so far he has been cunning enough to come and go without being seen."

"Let him go his way, it will not carry him far now," said Sukkenuk. "Such a journey as his can have but one ending."

"There is much good in him, Sukkenuk, and we will try once more to let it get the better of his evil. After that he must take his punishment, whatever it may be. He has gone home and will stay there while the rest of us are feasting and making merry; so even now he feels that he has made himself unwelcome amongst us."

"Let him stay away," said Sukkenuk. "It is as if he was a sick man, and had been told that his cure would come after he had been sent outside for some days. Per-

haps now, after his warning, he will do wrong no more."

But the Fox had not yet fully repented. Nanook's warning had disturbed and frightened him, but he longed to make a gambler's last throw. He would go once more, and once only, on a night expedition; he would have his proper share of the feast, and after that he would finally reform.

While the feast progressed, and the older hunters listened to the details of the young men's hunt, the Fox prepared for his last raid. He slipped very thick fur socks over his boots, for silence was the first essential to the success of his scheme—the slightest sound was intensified in the perfect stillness of the Arctic night.

The Fox knew that the frozen snow, creaking and crunching under the slightest footstep, was an infallible burglar alarm to men whose senses were so acute that in sleep itself they heard the least suspicious noise and were ready instantly with gun and spear and arrow to attack or defend. And around or just inside the porch of every dwelling were those fierce watchmen the dogs; always alert, sleeping with one eye open, and so sensitive to sound that they could note the quiet, spectre-like floating past of an owl.

To circumvent such burglar's perils needed cunning and resource, and the Fox possessed them, and believing in his infallibility he completed his preparations. His wife would have restrained him, but she had acted as receiver and consumer, she had felt the suspicion and scorn of her neighbours, and she too believed that this

crowning adventure would pass off in a manner that would enable them to be a well-stocked larder to the good and still profit in time by Nanook's warning.

"All will go well," the Fox assured his wife in a low voice as he took a long hook. "They have eaten plenty and the dogs are well fed and will be curled up. Besides, they know me, so that my scent will not disturb them. If a stranger went it would be different."

He stole out as silently as a shadow, and as he noiselessly approached the first dwelling to suit his purpose he felt a strange delight in his wrong-doing; a joy which was intensified as with his hook he annexed a supply of meat from a freshly-lardered safe. As he glided from house to house, plying his hook and taking small articles that had been left outside, and he realized that he was evading both men and dogs, his spirits rose and he could have shouted in the satisfaction of his achievement; but he made no sound of any sort until, heavily laden, he re-entered his home.

"There," said the Fox, "there is a sight to cheer the heart. Now we will eat, for that is the surest way of hiding what I have brought in the shape of meat. As for these other things we will use them from time to time, so that they will not be noticed. Some of them will be useful now that I am once more to be an honest hunter."

They ate and drank and were still sleeping heavily when the tribe were comparing notes, grumbling at the disappearance of their food and other property, openly declaring the Fox as the wrong-doer, and de-

manding that Nanook should deal with him, and his wife too.

Nanook lost no time. He called a conference of the headmen, and when they had briefly spoken of this last outrage it was decided that the Fox should be summoned to hear the charge and give an explanation.

Kakka was chosen as messenger, and he went to the Fox's *igloo,* rousing him from sleep.

"Nanook has sent for you both," said Kakka.

"I am not ready to come—and I have nothing to come for," answered the Fox.

"You know as well as I do that you will come," replied Kakka. "I shall wait, and take you, if necessary."

"There is the child," protested the Fox's wife.

"Bring it, or better, I will call and tell Okerlil to come and mind it in your absence. Yes, Okerlil will be as good to it as you are yourself, and with all your faults you are not failing as a mother. Come, get ready, while I fetch Okerlil."

When Kakka returned with the orphan the Fox and his wife were waiting outside. The woman handed her child to Okerlil, who promptly began the practice of soothing arts and wiles, for as the mother departed the child uttered piercing howls; but it soon became resigned to Okerlil's attentions. In her extremity Okerlil would gladly have exchanged some of her new conjuring knowledge for a prompt cure of infantile noises.

Kakka smiled as he went off, partly at his unexpected duties as an amiable gaoler but mostly in

admiration of Okerlil and her motherly efforts. When he caught his final glimpse of her she was holding one of the child's hands and waving it as a token of farewell and encouragement.

Nanook was grave and quiet as he put the whole case plainly before Terraginear. Thieving had been going on for some time. That was common knowledge. At first, so cunning was the wrong-doer, there was talk of visits from an earth-bound spirit, then wolves and dogs were blamed. But Sukkenuk, who was in close touch with spirit-land, knew that there was no earth-bound wanderer at fault, while the hunters of the tribe could show with ease that these thefts were not the work of animals.

"Then there is this very last night," Nanook said. "If we went to your home now, what should we find?"

The Fox was silent and hung his head, while his wife sobbed and shut her eyes, so that she could not see the accusing chief whose name stood for all that was kind and helpful.

"But a man's home is a sacred place," Nanook went on, "not to be entered lightly at such a time as this, nor shall we come. We have sent for you so that we may listen to you and help you. Now you have told of the work of various spirits. What have you to say on that point?"

With Sukkenuk's piercing gaze upon him the Fox had nothing to say.

"If there is the work of a spirit at all surely it is the evil one that put the hook in your hand and the

power to pull the meat from our larders, and gave you stealth to glide to and fro like a floating owl, and to try to steal from the white man will bring his wrath upon us, although he has always been good to us."

The Fox sat downcast and in growing gloom, while his wife's sobs were succeeded by loud weeping.

"We are not harsh judges," continued Nanook, "nor shall we do more than warn you finally that unless your evil courses are abandoned this village will no longer be your home and the Ivaleet will not know you as a son. You have been a good and prosperous hunter, and we know that what a man has been once he may be again. We still wish to help you."

Here Sukkenuk whispered earnestly with the chief, then, addressing the Fox he said, "Yes, I remember the time before these evil ways got hold of you, and your wife was a proud woman and held up her head in the tribe. The Ivaleet too, were proud of you. And to what have you fallen? You have become a pariah dog, stealing whenever there is a chance. Your self-respect has gone, so that you will take anything that is offered, though other men have hunted for it. And in doing these things you have lost your place amongst men and made yourself an outcast. And your wife has fallen with you. And what will people say of your child in the days to come?"

The Fox had become dumb, though he was near the point of adding to the melancholy noise his wife was making, to the growing distress of Nanook and the headmen.

Sukkenuk suddenly stepped in front of the accused man. "You have the wrong guardian spirit!" he cried. "Here, I will pluck it from you and cast it away." He made a swift motion, as if he had in reality torn something from the Fox and cast it angrily, completely and contemptuously away, and then added, "And see—I will give you a new guardian spirit." He made various significant passes. "There. You have now the spirit of the walrus, which is strong and brave. I do not want pay. You are now able to become a successful hunter again, if you wish."

"And," added Nanook, as a final warning, "remember what I have said, and think what it would mean for you to become wanderers. I have finished."

"Good! Good!" commented the audience. "That is just, and it shall be done."

The Fox rose and spoke at last. "We will go now. I thank you for your mercy, Nanook."

"And your kindness at all times," broke in the wife, who now that the worst was over, and had proved so much better than she had expected, was recovering rapidly.

"I will do no more wrong," declared the Fox, "and I will see that I do my part to fill other larders as well as my own with my hunting."

When the accused pair were in the open air again they saw Okerlil in the crowd. The mother rushed forward and seized her child. "You are to stay here," she cried joyously, "and not to go to any tribe that does not want you. Okerlil, you are a kind girl, and

it was a good day for you when your home was made with the Ivaleet. But it is not every tribe that has its Nanook. I think that Kakka wants to speak with you, so I will go."

She hurried away, and Kakka walked with Okerlil as far as Seorak's home.

"I think that Terraginear has been frightened into goodness," said Kakka. "Anyway, I am certain that he will no longer get confused with an earth-bound spirit, but will become a successful and respected hunter once again."

And Kakka's belief was fully justified.

As a start on the road to honesty the Fox that night, not without regret, went out and cast his stealing-hook into a hole in the ice from which no man could recover it.

CHAPTER XVII

ARCTIC SPRING-TIME

THE sting of winter had passed from the air and life was re-awakening. The sun, as it mounted the sky, seemed to sail through an ocean of deep azure, pouring life-giving rays around, as if calling upon Nature to awaken from her long winter sleep. And so it sailed throughout the long day, until it sank to rest in a blaze of dazzling glory.

And Nature had responded. From everywhere came the sound of trickling water beneath the snow, increasing in volume daily as the rocks gathered the warmth of the sun and melted the snow above. Delicate Arctic flowers, yellow and blue, unfolded in the sheltered spots; everywhere the cheep-cheep of the snow buntings could be heard as they flitted from rock to rock, their black and white feathers harmonizing so perfectly with the snow-flecked rocks that they were difficult to see. In the valleys and on the warm side of the hills coveys of ptarmigan settled and fed, and every day the snow sank lower and lower as it melted from beneath. Nor was that all, for tunnelling through the snow in all directions, the Arctic mice, or lemming, were busy scratching their way down to the moss below, to feed upon the rich store of insects and grubs which were hidden there.

Nanook on such a morning as this glorious spring

gave left his *igloo* and gazed on the scene, a look of deep content on his face, filled his lungs with the life-giving air, and stretched his limbs. It was his own country, he was part and parcel of it and loved its vastness, freedom and the existence it gave him. He would not have exchanged it for any other country in the world.

Other men joined him and they greeted each other.

"The spring has indeed come," said Nanook. "I shall soon need lighter sealskin clothing. This is too heavy. And my *igloo* is thawing and dripping everywhere."

"And mine also," said Illkaluk. "The roof is very thin and may fall in at any time. My wife fixed a big skin over the sleeping-place and it filled whilst we slept. Early this morning it gave way and—ugh! the water poured over me. It was so cold. I am still wet. And it was not made pleasanter by my wife, who, being dry, laughed at me."

Nanook and the rest laughed too, and the good-natured Illkaluk joined in the merriment.

"We shall have to alter our *iglooeet* soon or the roofs will fall in," observed Nanook, and they separated for their daily hunting.

It was the breeding season, and the seals were flocking up from the south. Their skins were needed for clothing, *kyak* coverings and tents, so that no one could afford to be idle or lose a day.

Nanook was active and energetic, and he loved the spring days because they made it possible for him to live in the open. And he believed in setting an example

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

The summer fishing

to the younger men, and they, looking upon him as an ideal leader, gladly followed him.

There was no more enthusiastic hunter now than the Fox. His thieving past was gone with the winter, and like that season was not spoken of. It was said that Sukkenuk had indeed well plucked the evil spirit out of Terraginear and put in its place the spirit of the walrus. Whenever Nanook could speak a word of praise of the Fox he did so, but no reference was made by him to the sinister night roamings.

In each *igloo* was a pile of sealskins, carefully stored in readiness for drying and dressing when the spring was more advanced, and of this fact the children were well aware. The rush of spring work had not yet begun; it was a slack time as far as they were concerned and everyone was taking things quietly. The children especially were having a holiday. The boys were allowed to stay at home and help their mothers; but the help was greatly hampered by the resistless call of the open air and the sunshine. They longed to get out and play the games that winter made impossible, and for the most part the indulgent mothers gave them their liberty when they had fetched the day's water supply. Once outside the girls joined the boys, and the whole band of children ranged themselves for a game of whip and ball. The ball was roughly made of pieces of skin sewn together and the whip was short, with several thongs.

Standing opposite each other, the children passed the ball up and down the line, each rank trying to get

it, shouts of happy laughter marking the simple contest. When tired of this game the players changed to one of catch ball, beloved of all. The ball was tossed from rank to rank, each side trying to catch it in mid-air as it was passed backward and forward. Okerlil and Tooktoo excelled in this game and joined in it merrily, for the orphan was still girl enough to delight in these contests with her young friends.

One day the game ended in a draw, and the parties broke up into small groups, each inclination being followed.

Tooktoo thought of the ptmarigan and of his bow and arrows. Here was a chance to use the weapon and to please Nanook and Annorak by bringing back some birds for the family pot. Koogloo and Nooee, boys of his own age, also possessed bows and arrows, made for them by their parents, and they fell in with Tooktoo's plans.

"There were ptarmigan on the hill this morning," said Koogloo. "I saw four alight close by and I threw a stone at them. They flew up and settled on the hill over there. I saw them and heard them give their calls —like this." He imitated the male ptarmigan calling to his mate, and Tooktoo answered the call perfectly. They ran off to fetch their bows and arrows.

"Where are you going?" asked Annorak as Tooktoo left the *igloo*.

"Up the hill to get some ptarmigan for you," he told her. "Koogloo saw them settle there this morning."

"Very well," she answered. "But be careful and don't fall down from any of the steep places."

The boys scampered off and climbed the hill.

"Let us take our own parts and see what we can get," said Tooktoo, and each went his own way.

Boys are boys all the world over, and in this Polar region the spirit of mischief was as strong as many leagues farther south. So it happened that when one boy heard the ptarmigan call and stalked the sound and was on the very point of firing an arrow another boy rushed out and revealed himself as the imitating impostor. So cunningly was the bird mimicked that each boy in turn was deceived; but every time the trick was played it raised shouts of laughter that echoed vast distances. That the deception might have made a target of the jester and given him an arrow that was meant for a bird merely added to the zest of the imposition.

At the end of an hour or so of this pastime the boys rejoined forces and began hunting in earnest for signs of the birds. Tooktoo saw tracks leading down into the valley, and these were followed nearly to the foot of the hill.

"See," said Koogloo, pointing to some scratches on the snow close to the footprints, "they have flown. There are the marks of their wings on the snow."

"Yes," answered Tooktoo, "but they have not gone far—the marks are not deep enough. They have gone across the valley to another feeding-ground."

"I see them," Nooee declared. "They are in the valley, sunning themselves by that big boulder. They are going across the valley and settling on the other hill. They have found another feeding-place. We shall get them. What fine birds they are!"

The boys, keeping well under cover of every boulder and hummock of snow, reached the other side without frightening the ptarmigan. They crept cat-like from cover to cover, with their bows and arrows ready.

Tooktoo was the first to get within range and kill a bird. Koogloo shot at and killed another. But Nooee, excited and aiming badly, missed. He was shooting from above and his arrow went over the bird. Leaning forward to see what had happened, he overbalanced and rolled down, actually going on top of the bird and killing it by his weight.

Tooktoo and Koogloo roared with laughter at the mishap, and as Nooee ruefully rose Tooktoo shouted, "Do you kill birds by throwing yourself at them? It is a new way of getting them. You are surely a stone and not a boy!"

The remaining two ptarmigan were flying fast across the valley, away from the danger of man, when there was a swish of wings and a hawk swooped from the blue and caught one of them; and the boys, tired of bird-hunting, went home comparing notes and mild adventures.

Whilst the boys were so joyously employed the girls were busy in another way. They formed themselves into a band for lemming hunting. The skins of these

animals were used for various purposes, such as sticking over cuts or bruises, like plaster, and a supply was wanted by the women of the village. The girls armed themselves with sticks in which long barbed wire had been inserted and went to a patch of snow which had been well warmed by the sun. Lying down with their ears to the snow, with their weapons ready, javelin-wise, the girls listened to the scratch, scratch which told of a lemming burrowing its way along towards its next meal. The wire spear was smartly thrust down through the snow in the direction of the sound, and so keen was the girls' hearing and so true their aim that they seldom failed to kill and bring the little animal to the surface.

Okerlil was an expert in this form of hunting, and when the boys returned to the village and passed the girls she proudly showed Tooktoo a pile of lemmings at her side.

"This has been a splendid day," said Tooktoo. "Come on, Nooee, show the girls how to kill a ptarmigan!" And to Nooee's wrath he related the incident of rolling down the hill. "He was almost as swift as the hawk," laughed Tooktoo. "What a pile of lemmings! How Seorak will praise you when she sees what you have caught—and you can make another fancy bag for Kakka."

Full of the joy of young lives, the boys went to their homes and took the hearty midday meal which their keen appetites demanded.

The day was still young, it was only noon, and well

fed and full of energy the boys sought some means of getting rid of it. If the dogs had not been taken away by the hunters they would have organized a sled run round the village; they might have snowballed, but the snow was too powdery, or they might have gone lemming hunting, but it was agreed that such sport was unworthy of men, though quite appropriate for girls.

"If only we had some guns," said Tooktoo regretfully, "we could let them off and frighten the women; but they have all been taken away."

They got their whips and practised cutting at a mark, but the game was tame. Something more thrilling and offering more scope was needed.

"Ah! There we are!" exclaimed Koogloo, pointing to a long snow slope stretching from the top to the base of a neighbouring hill and leading down into the village. It was of good width and was packed hard by the stormy winds.

"Yes, we'll slide!" shouted Tooktoo.

"But how?" asked Nooee, "we have no sled."

"I'll soon fetch one," said Koogloo. Whilst eating his dinner his quick eyes had noticed a roll of sealskins in his mother's house. They were large and had been put aside for making the summer tent. The hair was still on, and the skins being unwashed and undressed, it was thick with grease, so that the skins would not easily get wet.

Koogloo's mother was a scold and a gossip, and she was now abroad exchanging confidences. Koogloo knew that if he had asked for the loan of a skin or two

he would have been refused, wherefore, taking care to see that his mother really was at a safe distance, he swiftly annexed three of the largest skins and some line and rushed back to his companions, dragging his trophies with him. "See," he announced, "here's a sled for each of us!"

Feeling guilty, but comforted by the reflection that the one to face Koogloo's mother in the end was Koogloo himself, the other boys helped to fasten a loop of line to the head of each sealskin. This line served as a pulling-rope and to hold on by, and the skins were dragged to the top of the fairly steep slope.

Koogloo, as the originator of the game, had the first slide. Placing his sealskin flat on the snow, hair downward, he seated himself upon it and holding fast to the line pushed off, beginning with a slow glide that ended in a glorious stop in the village, after a rush down the slope.

The sledding became a triumphal progress. The shouts attracted all the children in the village, and there were clamorous cries for free rides and plenty of them. So it happened that the skin sleds were crowded with passengers, not a few of whom were rolled off during the descent and made their own way to the bottom of the slope, amid a joyous uproar.

The women, gossiping, heard the commotion and smiled.

"It is good to hear them," commented Koogloo's mother. "We must go and look."

She was the first to leave the group of gossips, and

the first to see the slide and stand spellbound.

Koogloo, now a popular hero, had started off with a skin-load of free and shrieking passengers, bunched together and rushing down the hill with growing swiftness, Koogloo making gallant efforts to prevent capsizing and to take his crew in triumph to the journey's end.

In favourable circumstances Koogloo would have steered to victory, but the sudden appearance of his mother made an appalling situation. Physical and mental paralysis seized him, and realizing what the state of the skins was by this time, he tumbled his human cargo in a confused bunch at his mother's feet, rolled over, picked himself up and fled.

Tooktoo and Nooee, following in procession, saw the catastrophe, and realizing the cause, did not stand on ceremony. Their sole purpose was to avoid a meeting with the scold, who was already regarding in growing horror the wrecked condition of the skins.

"It is yours," mumbled Tooktoo, scrambling to his feet as he rolled over at the feet of Koogloo's mother. "I should like to thank you, but I must hurry home."

The scold held up a skin on which there was no hair left and in which there were many holes, and she screamed to the boys to come back; but they were beyond hearing. Koogloo had rushed well away, for in the distance he saw his father returning from the chase. He kept very near him as they re-entered the village.

"See," said Koogloo's mother wrathfully, holding up a ruined skin, "this comes of not taking your son hunt-

ing with you. I will certainly punish the boy as soon as he lets your hand go."

"Nay," returned the hunter, smiling, "boys will be boys, and I did such things myself when I was young. But listen to me, my small hunter, you must not play tricks like this. To-morrow I will make you a little sled, and next time get the young dogs and teach them to pull. That will keep you out of mischief. And remember," added the hunter pacifically to his wife, "that it is spring-time, and new life is in the blood of all of us."

CHAPTER XVIII

SUMMER AND GLADNESS

NANOOK had left his *igloo* and gone into residence in a large new tent pitched on a new spot close to the seashore. His wife had given the last season's tent, which was still in good condition, to Seorak, and the present had still more mollified the old woman, who was now, for many reasons, losing most of her witch-like characteristics. The young seal hunt had been successful, and many of the large sealskins had been turned into the tents which were now the summer dwellings of the Ivaleet, pitched on fresh clean ground, leaving the old locality to the cleansing powers of sun and snow. Seorak had not expected to occupy a brand new tent, and she was well pleased to think that she was the owner of a still excellent shelter.

There was no longer any night that counted, and the heat of the sun became intense. Going to bed became a very simple matter, especially for the children, who lay down on the heather wherever they chanced to be and slept and gathered strength with every breath they took. The slack, dead hours of the winter were gone, and there was more than enough for all to do, leaving little time for leisure.

The rocks surrounding the village were covered with white skins spread out to dry, and from all directions

came the rasp of the paring-knives and the laughter and cheerful gossip of the Ivaleet. Seaward the ice was almost free of snow. Groups of seals dozed around every seal-hole, and the ice in all quarters was dotted with them. It was upon these animals that the hunters relied for their supply of skins for clothing and barter. The winter skins, being coarser, were used for the tents.

The floe-edge crept nearer to the land from day to day as the tides broke off and carried away huge fields of the ice. In the distance were the solitary bergs which had been firmly embedded during the winter but were now free and floating southward. At times an awe-inspiring sight was witnessed when, a section of a berg having melted and plunged into the water, the whole berg, tinted with the rays of the setting sun, slowly rolled over to find a new base, the roar of the surge being heard from across the miles of ice, booming over the village.

A merry party was gathered in front of Nanook's new home. He had caught many young seals, and their mothers and Annorak had engaged extra workers to help her with her pile of skins. Several of the widows were in the party, glad of the employment. Seorak too was included, being a clever and steady worker, and in these days a genial companion and welcome because of her power to help the hours to pass with her tales and reminiscences.

Annorak was busy making new clothing for herself and family, and she kept happy conversation going as her needle flashed to and fro and she directed the tasks

of her party. Some of the women, with their small boards on their knees and knives in hand, pared the thick layers of blubber from the skins, the blubber being cut up and put into large sealskin bags for future use or barter. Other women were pegging out the newly-scraped skins on the ground or on frames to dry in the sun.

Seorak, being the most skilled worker, was paring the membranes from the skins and washing and drying the fox and bear skins. Near her was Okerlil, busy cooking meat for the workers. She had found a piece of drift-wood, and with this and heather and plenty of blubber she had made a large fire. Over the blaze she had put her cooking-pot, filled with seal-meat and water, making an appetising stew for the party.

Nanook and Atseak had gone off very early in the morning, crawling for seals. With a long gauntleted skin glove on the left hand and gun trailing in the right, and hoods over their heads, they had squirmed and crawled over the ice to seals, at a distance looking and sounding like seals themselves, from their dress and their imitations of the coughs and antics of the animals, basking in the sun.

Tooktoo had been put in charge of the sled and team, his duty being to keep the dogs quiet until a hunter had been successful, then to drive up, help to tie the carcass on the sled and in due course return to the settlement with a load.

Nanook joined the working party by his tent, and as he shared the evening meal Okerlil flushed with pleasure

at his praise of her cooking, nor was she unmindful of the relish of the savoury dish which Kakka, who was a guest, was honest enough to show in a very audible manner.

When the women had gone and the men were talking over the day's hunt Nanook said, "We shall have to stay on shore now for a few days, because the ice is breaking up and may go at any time. The tides have cut roads through the floes, which are only hanging to the shore in places. The first heavy swell will break them from their hold and they will float out."

"Yes," agreed Sukkenuk, "but that will not make us uneasy, since we have been spending our time so well. Is it not better, Terraginear, to fill the larder this way?" He smiled at the Fox, who nodded acquiescence. "Your tent is one of the finest in the village," added Sukkenuk.

"Yes," said the Fox, looking at Nanook, "it was a good day for me when I was told of tribes that would not want me as a son."

"Come," remarked Nanook, "we will say no more of that. Not only is your tent so good but your pelts will give joy to the factor when we go to see him to trade with him, and that will now be very soon."

When they looked seaward in the morning they saw that the ice in the bay facing the village had broken during the night and that there was clear water, the side floes being still intact along the shore on each side of the bay. But with an abundance of food in hand there was no need for alarm, and the people went on with ordinary tasks, while the children climbed the

rocks and searched for anything that might have been cast up. Driftwood when it was found was taken to the camp.

"Where are you, Koogloo?" shouted Tooktoo, wanting his companion. "Let us look for eggs. Come, where are you?" He searched and at last discovered Koogloo, or rather his legs, for the boy was lying on his back in a niche of the rocks. The legs were raised up and like most of the body were uncovered, Koogloo being asleep in the sunshine.

With an unpleasantly lifelike imitation of the scold's angriest tones Tooktoo shocked Koogloo into wakefulness.

"I do not want to come," growled the sleeper.

"Not to get eggs?" asked Tooktoo, in affected astonishment. "Would you rather go and borrow a pile of your mother's skins? She has plenty, and we know a way of getting the hair off them without paring with knives."

"Go yourself," said Koogloo, "and you can have the present she would give to me." And the honours of war having been equalized he went off with Tooktoo, and the children being assembled and organized they returned with a supply of seabirds' eggs which took the edge off the tongue of even Koogloo's mother.

From this time onward, during the days of sunshine and gladness, the Ivaleet secured the tusks of the narwhal, hides of the white whale, and many more skins. Eider ducks, geese and other birds were caught, many by the boys with their bows and arrows, and the sea

trout came up from the salt water into all the rivers. Birds and fish were cooked hastily over fires of heather, and no meals were more heartily enjoyed than these, unless the dogs were reckoned with.

Nixee, an ancient dog-leader, and his equally old companions, had put aside their winter ferocity and were making an honest and amiable livelihood by fishing at each low tide. Their methods were primitive but profitable. Choosing a pool, the dogs sat down at the edge, and as the tide fell and left fish stranded a paw was put out, a victim hooked and, still wriggling and amazed, vanished down a throat. Nixee was an expert angler and he waxed fatter tide by tide, and the fish and sun worked such wonders with him that his rheumatism almost disappeared and he walked as jauntily as the youngest of them.

Okerlil had earned enough sealskins for a complete suit, and she was now absorbed in the work of cutting and fashioning her summer clothing, and, for reasons of her own, not sparing labour in its decoration. Tooktoo had suggested additional or alternative colour schemes, and had not felt in the least injured when Okerlil emphasized the importance of boys minding their own business.

The fish had become plentiful in the rivers, and Nanook, seated outside his tent cleaning his gun, said to Atseak, "Is it not time for the summer fishing?"

"Yes," answered the old man, "this is the fishing moon."

The young men drew near and listened eagerly, for

the fishing picnic was a longed-for annual excursion. "Where shall we go?" they asked.

"Let Nanook decide," answered Atseak.

"We will go to Nouyalik," said the chief.

"Good!" they shouted, and rushed off to spread the news and to make arrangements.

It was a happy party that left the settlement for the fishing. The boats were filled with riotous humanity, with the old men at the helms as steadying influences, and they were pulled slowly up the fiord until the fishing-place was reached. This was a small cove with a shelving beach, where the river descended and was divided by large rocks into many small streams at low tide, but covered at high water. There was a pool, lake-like, across which other generations had built a dam of rocks, leaving a large opening in the centre, and at each tide shoals of big sea trout came up. Most of the fish remained in the lake, others passing on and hiding under the rocks whilst the cascades poured over them.

The picnic would last at least a week and might continue a fortnight, so that whilst the men moored the boats the women pitched the tents and prepared the camp.

As soon as the boats were free of passengers they were filled with heavy stones and just after high tide were pulled out to the centre of the dam, and the stones discharged to fill the gap.

At the fall of the tide the water was beaten with oars, paddles and boards to frighten the fish back and pre-

Courtesy of Revillon Frères

"The boats were filled with riotous humanity"

vent them from escaping over the dam; while each boat took its place along the dam and became responsible for a particular part. In due course the pool was emptied of its fish, and in this and other ways during the days of the fishing a great catch was made. There now remained only the packing up and return to the settlement, where the fish would be split and dried in the sun for future consumption or barter.

There was one event at the end of the fishing which crowned the success of the holiday. Annorak had remained behind in her tent, with Seorak in attendance. Nothing was heard and nothing was said, nor did any visitors intrude; but when the exulting fishers returned in the evening with the last of a splendid catch Annorak was ready to greet them with her usual good-humour and to introduce them to her new-born son, cosily wrapped in a hare-skin garment.

Tooktoo gazed in astonishment and some disgust, whilst Nanook laughed in his joy and pride.

"What do you think?" demanded Nanook, as the excited women, forgetting the fishing, crowded round and praised the chubby, healthy little stranger.

"I do not know," answered Tooktoo. "At present he looks like a very little seal; but some day I will teach him to shoot with the bow and arrow."

"By the time he is grown there may be no more use for bows and arrows," said Nanook. "We shall see; but a hunter he will certainly become, like you, my own son."

"The child has brought good luck on our excursion," cried the women. "He must have a name. What shall we call him?"

Seorak took the child from his mother's arms and looked upon him with a kind smile on the wrinkled old face from which all uncharitableness had gone. A warm feeling surged in her lonely heart as she said, "Yes, he has brought success to our fishing, and he will bring greater success to our tribe in the future, for he comes of a good stock. We will call him Ooluksâk, which is the Spirit of the Rivers and Lakes and all they contain."

"Yes, call him Ooluksâk," cried the people of the Ivaleet, as the baby was handed back to his mother. And so he was named.

When the fishers returned to the settlement they found that a new arrival had come, a white teacher who was to stay with the tribe—an elderly man who spoke their tongue with a strange southern accent, but was understood by them.

Nanook's sympathies went out at once to the stranger, who came forward and greeted each one in turn, then left them, for they had much business to do. First there was the selling of the season's hunt. The factor's store was crowded with the hunters and their wives, and hides, oil, tusks, fox, wolf and bear skins were examined, priced and credit given; then came the buying of guns, ammunition and articles of domestic use which were beginning to oust the primitive utensils which had served the Eskimos for unnumbered generations. It

was fair and honest trading, and each side was satisfied and pleased.

To his intense joy Tooktoo had been presented with a gun, and now felt that he was included in the ranks of men; Seorak and Okerlil had done well with their fishing, and Kakka had sold his year's hunt at a good price and possessed a new gun, knife, and ammunition, and had liberal credit to his name. These things Okerlil knew, and she sat entranced as she gazed at some strings of beads which Kakka had given her. She was very happy now, for she knew that there was no longer any doubt of the realization of her dream.

The time drew near for the great autumn deer hunt. This meant much preparation and the carrying of heavy loads on long journeys before the deer country was reached; then came the long tramp back through the early snows, laden with deer hams and rolls of deerskins. It was the chief event of the year and could only be undertaken by the strong and robust members of the tribe.

"Will you stay?" asked Nanook of Atseak, when all was ready.

"No, I will go with you; but it will be my last deer hunt. Next season I must stay behind," replied the old hunter.

"And you, Seorak, what will you do?"

"I shall remain, the journey would be too much for me," she answered.

"Then you shall stay in my tent," Nanook promised her, "and guard it—and I will see that there is plenty

of oil and meat, so that you will not starve whilst we are away."

"And you, Okerlil, will you come with us?" asked Annorak, smiling.

At that moment Kakka entered. "Yes," he said, "she will come with us as my wife."

"What do you say to that?" asked Nanook, smiling also as he again addressed Seorak. "She is as your daughter and will do your bidding—but Okerlil may not be willing to go."

"Nay," laughed Annorak, "she is willing to look after Kakka, and will do it well; and Kakka will make her a good husband."

Seorak, who had been silent, said, "She is a good girl and will make a good wife. It is right that she should have a protector when I am gone. Let it be so. I wish them well."

"You shall never regret it," said Kakka, "and there shall always be a place for you in our tent."

Okerlil's conjuring aspirations vanished from that moment.

The day of departure on the two months' absence came, and boats were packed with tents, utensils, women, children and dogs; the old men in charge and the adult men in their *kyaks,* for hunting purposes.

Kakka and his wife Okerlil had places in Nanook's boat, and the world seemed very joyous that bright day when all embarked for the first stage of their journey, which was to the great river where the boats and *kyaks* would be left and the inland march begun.

Seorak and the other old people went down and saw the party off; but there were no fears, for the factor and the teacher would protect them till the hunters returned.

And on the lonely hill where Nanook had looked for the return of his hunters the solitary figure of the new teacher stood. He watched the boats until they were out of sight.

"Here," he murmured, "in this vast silent world, I open the last chapter of my life. There goes the very old; I bring the very new—and may it be that we may rear such noble sons as Nanook."

THE END

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